# Flying Snake

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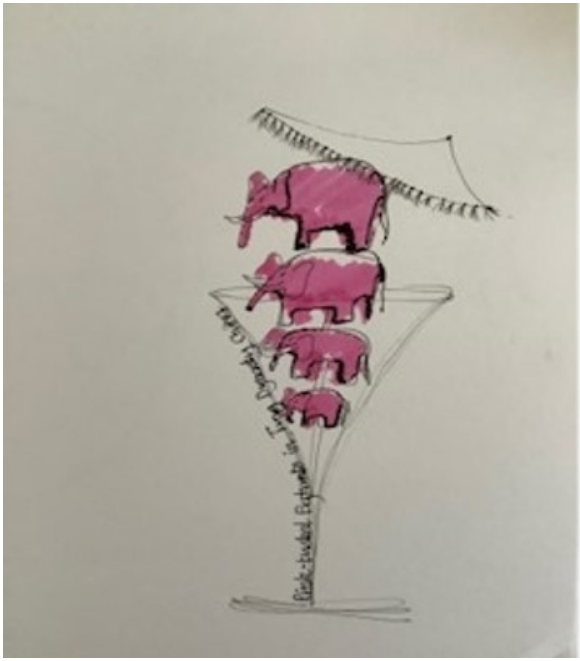

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**Snakes swallowing their young . Egyptian vulture off Cornwall . Strange snakes . Do Cuckoos Hibernate? .Vanishing Pigeons . New Guinea mystery animals . Wampus Cat . Rainbows around the eyes . And More!**

FLYING SNAKE SUBSCRIPTION AND GUIDELINES

ESTABLISHED BY RICHARD MUIRHEAD AKA DR DEVO IN 2011

Flying Snake appears about twice a year depending on the time I can find to research for items to include in it and whether or not I have recovered from dancing `The Poot` at Macclesfield`s clubs and pubs. Cover price is £3.99, £ 12 for 3 issues, please send a check for £3.99 etc to Richard Muirhead NOT Flying Snake, to:

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# Dr Devo`s Diary

"For I pray God for the introduction of new creatures into this is-land. For I pray God for the ostriches of Salisbury Plain, the beavers of the Medway and silver fish of Thames." *Christopher Smart `Rejoice in the Lamb`. Poet, naturalist, lunatic (1722-1771)*

Welcome to issue 21 of Flying Snake,we are passed the symbolically important issue 20 which marked ten years of the magazine. I was intending to include more family art work to celebrate ten years but due to absence of space have been unable to, but below I include Clara Kenning`s wonderful ostrich. I wish to thank all contributors to issue 21,Bob Skinner,Loes Modderman,Richard George, Karl Shuker,Ulrich Magin, Kate Shaw and Gary Mangiacopra. I am particular happy to include the Soviet account of the Almasty, the Centre for Fortean Zoology UK made a significant contribution to study of the almasty with their trip to the Caucasus in 2008 and I am happy to be able to back this up with the extract from Sputnik magazine. Apart from working on Flying Snake I am back at Oxfam working in the book room, but I have heard nothing about the work at the Talking Newspaper for the Blind. I went for a brief holiday in Bournemouth in July with my mum and fortunately we missed the torrential rain. I am completing this issue in mid-August and it already feels like autumn. God bless and take care! Richard.

© Clara Kenning

**ADDERS SWALLOWING THEIR YOUNG** Various Newspaper Reports Thanks to **Bob Skinner**

**Nottinghamshire Guardian** 4 January 1896 p. 7
VIPERS SWALLOWING YOUNG.
There was recently a warm controversy on the subject of vipers swallowing their young. Mr. Gerard writes to the current number of "Nature Notes," putting on record a piece of evidence which seems to him particularly valuable, because the witness had never heard a word on the subject, and did not know that anyone had ever asserted the fact. The Jesuit Father de Smedt, long a misionary among the Red Indians, told the story to Mr. Gerard. Riding one day across the prairie, he came to a shallow hollow, at the bottom of which was a large rattlesnake and a number of young ones playing round it. As he advanced his horse made a noise, whereupon the young ones scuttled off to their mother, who opened her mouth, and they disappeared down her throat. Much interested. he reined up and remained perfectly still, and presently first one and then another of the little ones hopped out of the mouth, until they were all again in sight. Then he struck his boot smartly with his riding whip, and again they vanished as before. He repeated the experiment several times, and always with the same result.

**The Batley Reporter and Guardian** 30 May 1896 p. 8
ANOTHER FALLACY.-
The "scientific naturalists" with Sir Wm. Fowler at their head, have turned at last on the snake swallowing its young question. Sir William, who is the chief director of the Natural History Department of the British Museum, has written to the Damfries agent of the Bank of Scotland offering a reward of £10 for any carcase of a snake (viperus verus, which abound on the moor on the lands of that county) with young inside that had been previously born, and had taken refuge down the throat of their parent for protective purposes. A good many years ago the Field offered a reward of £5 on similar terms, and Mr. Tegetmeier, the very able but irritatingly sceptical naturalist of that paper, added £1 "all out of his own pocket." These valuable six gold-

-en sovereigns have not yet been claimed.

**The Bradford Daily Telegraph** 7 January 1899 p. 3

DO SNAKES SWALLOW THEIR YOUNG IN CASE OF DANGER?

Do snakes swallow their young is a question which has, for a great number of years, exercised the minds of naturalists, and controversial essays without num ber have been written upon it, and yet we are no nearer to a solution of the question than at the beginning. The various periodicals devoted to natu ral history from time to time contain notes, the writers of which assert, on the good authority of some friend, that the phenomenon in question is an undoubted one, but no naturalist of any standing has witnessed such a thing, neither is it generally believed that snakes do swallow their young

Gilbert White, who died in 1793, has little to say on the subject, and dismisses the question in a very few words. "Several intelligent folks," he says, assure me that they have seen the Viper open her mouth and admit her helpless young down her throat on sudden surprises, just as the female opossum does her brood into the pouch under her belly upon the like emergencies, and yet the London Viper catchers insist on it, to Mr. Barrington, that no such thing ever happens."

In the current number of the "Zoologist " Mr. Adam J. Corrie records that a Mr. Kimber and his woodman named Richard Eccles saw in Minoten Woods, near Witney, an adder swallow its four young ones. "Mr. Kimber and the wood man," he says, "then watched, and saw the young ones (four in number) crawl into the old adder's mouth, she lying at full length with her mouth open to receive them. The woodman then struck the adder with his stick, and killed her. In a few minutes the young ones crawled out through the wounded mouth of the mother, and of course met the same fate." This circumstance, however, occurred about the date of the Crimean War." The Editor of the "Zoologist," in replying to this says We are informed by Mr. Legelmeier that the propriotors of the Field have for very many years

offered a reward of £1, and for the last three years of £5, for a Viper seen to swallow its young and received dead with the young inside, but the reward has not yet been claimed.

"The young Vipers burst from the egg with all their powers perfect, and escape rapidly into the grass directly they are disturbed, so rapidly that the bystander concludes they must have disappeared down the mother's throat. No case of Vipers swallowing young has ever been observed at the Zoological Gardens at Regent's Park."

The following letter from a correspondent in Victoria, and a constant reader of the Naturalists' Column in the "Bradford Weekly Telegraph," will be read with interest by many of our readers. It is headed-Daisy Hill, Riddell's Creek, Victoria, and dated October 10, 1898, and reads as follows: "I would like to send you my pen; it is a feather from the wing of an eagle, and the best pen I ever had. Now and again I have to work in the garden with my gun beside me, both barrels charged, and four spare cartridges in my pocket. Foxes, eagles, hawks, and snakes have to be attended to. One day an eagle was flying away with a big heavy fowl; I followed with all speed, and got both of them, the fowl alive and little the worse for her aerial trip. The thief suffered the penalty of the crime. I cut off his wings and nailed them on a board to dry. In going out this season we have to be very careful, and keep our eyes open, as the snakes are very numerous and lively."I read in the Naturalists' Column' of the Weekly Telegraph a little time back a lecture you had had on snakes, and the lecturer said that snakes never swallow their young as is often reported. He speaks from theory, and not from actual observation. Let me tell you they do swallow their young in time of danger. The kangaroo pouches her young, and will not abandon them unless very closely pressed; she will then thrown them into tall grass or thick scrub where they can hide until the danger is past. Not so with the snake. You may chase it, corner it, wound it, but still it will not disgorge its young. Just below any place some boys came upon a tiger snake with its young, playing in the sun. The boys threw stones, the snake swallowed its young; then the boys killed the snake, and found inside it thirty nine young ones. They killed the whole of them. I am not quoting you fiction, but facts. We had a big black old man kangaroo down beside the garden fence, but I could not get a shot at him." Here, again, the writer has not witnessed the phenomenon himself; his record is the testimony of some lads who have perhaps been taught from their infancy that

"snakes do swallow their young," and have thus had a pre-conceived idea or impression, which has been handed down to them traditionally that such is the case, and have never once heard the state ment controverted or questioned. Hence, there is no wonder that when the young snakes rapidly dis appeared before their eyes, and were so quickly lost to sight, that the lads should unhesitatingly arrive at the conclusion that they had run down their mother's throat for protection from the supposed langer of their enemies.

To sum up, we may say that there are many people who do believe that snakes swallow their young for protection when in danger of their lives; there are many more who do not believe in the phenomenon at all, nor will they entertain the idea for one moment; and there are still more who are neutral, and waiting and watching for a solution of the interesting and unique question. In the words of a distinguished writer on another subject, "it is both absurd and unscientific to deny the possibility of unusual occurrences, ancient or modern, simply because they are not in accordance with everyday experience in this country, or in this age of the world, if they will not readily lend them. selves to verification by ordinary scientific methods; or, worse still, simply because they do not square with our pre-conceived notions of what is, or ought to be, true. In such a case it is better neither to affirm nor to deny, but to wait for further light on the subject."

**Norwich Mercury** 30 august 1902 p 3

BRITISH WILD LIFE. BY THE AUTHOR OF "TO-DAY WITH NATURE."

"ADDERS SWALLOWING YOUNG" AGAIN.

By a curious coincidence, in the very week after we had finished arguing whether adders swallow their young for protection, Mr. H. Win chester, of Backsteep Manor, Dallington, sent a dead female adder to the editor of the "Field," and claimed the reward of £5 tor a viper that had swallowed its young. The box was taken as it arrived to the College of Surgeons by the Natural History Editor of the "Field," and carefully dissected in his presence by skilled hands. The gullet, stomach, and intestines were all empty, showing not only that the adder had not swallowed any young, but also that she had not swallowed anything at all for some time before she was killed; but in the proper place were found on further dissection, some young that would have been hatched and born (for the hatch ing of adders' eggs, unlike those of the grass snake, takes place inside the mother-serpent's body) in a few days. Now here was a case in which ocular evidence had seemed so indis putable that the snake which had been seen to swallow her young was actually sent to London for the reward of £5; yet nothing of the kind had occurred! What had been seen, no doubt, was the sudden disappearance of some of the earlier-hatched young near the head of their mother. This incident will show how it is still possible, without any disrespect towards honest witnesses, for naturalists to declare that the alleged habit of female adders to swallow their young remains to be proved.

**The Dundee Courier** 27 May 1903 p. 4

1191 ADDER SWALLOWING HER YOUNG.-The question as to whether the female adder in moments of danger ever swallow her young to ensure them protection has often been the subject of controversy. I think I am correct in saying that the majority of geologists maintain she does not, in spite of well attested instances. Mr. Gerald Leighton, M.B.. writing to the Zoologist" in September, 1900, remarked that from the zoological standpoint there was no reason why the adder-swallowing theory should not be accepted upon the evidence already given. I hope to discuss the subject at some length in a future issue. For the present I may remark that I have always believed in the theory, though I have never been fortunate enough to witness

the phenomenon. For the same reason I believe in the great sea-serpent, viz., the evidence of many un impeachable witnesses. If any reader has ever seen a viper swallowing her young I should be obliged if The sent a detailed note to the " Herald offices. E.W.S.

**The Crewe Chronicle** 5 July 1930 p.
DO ADDERS SWALLOW THEIR YOUNG?

In our correspondence columns (says "The Field ") will be found a letter from Major Maurice Portal which may be expected to re vive an old discussion. Major Portal offers £10 to anyone who wili produce to the satisfaction ot Dr. Collinge, of York, an adder with young which it has swallowed alive. Do adders swallow their young to protect them from danger? Many people scout the notion. Years ago Frank Buck-land offered a reward of £5 for an adder with a string round its throat and the young alive for inspection in its esophagus. But the reward was never claimed. And if there was one person in the world who might have been expected to claim it -if the thing were possible -it was Brusher Mills, of the New Forest, who in his time killed more adders than any living Englishman. But Brusher, if he was asked whether adders swallowed their young, used to smile.

# From Bob Skinner

## CHAPTER XX E.W.HENDY SOMERSET BIRDS AND SOME OTHER FOLK

### DOES THE ADDER SWALLOW HER YOUNG?

The ancient controversy as to whether the female adder swallows her young (not se offendendo, as Hamlet's gravedigger revives periodically. The problem is still unsolved though it is at

least as old as Gilbert White. The Natural History of Selborne contains his letter to Pennant (dated June 18th, 1768) in which he wrote:

'Several intelligent folks assure me that they have seen the viper open her mouth, and admit her helpless young down her throat on sudden surprises, just as the female opossum does her brood into the pouch under her belly upon the like emergencies; and yet the London viper-catchers insist on it, to Mr. Barrington, that no such thing ever happens.'

In a letter to Daines Barrington, dated April 29th, 1776, he describes how, in the previous August, he killed and cut open a female viper and found fifteen live young in her belly. The letter ends:

'There was little room to suppose that this brood had ever been in the open air before; and that they were taken in for refuge, at the mouth of the dam, when she perceived that danger was approach ing; because then probably we should have found them somewhere in the neck, and not in the abdomen."

These quotations present the two opposing views in the contro versy. There are on record numerous circumstantial accounts given by eye-witnesses. These reports do not greatly vary: the adder was heard hissing; the young ones were seen all round her; she raised her head a little above the ground and the young crawled into her mouth and disappeared. Some witnesses saw the tail of a young adder curling round

its mother's jaws. Often they killed the reptile and squeezed the young out of her mouth, or found the fry alive inside her.

So much for the evidence on this side. Now listen to the other. First, it must be remembered that the oviduct of the female adder extends some two thirds of her length, towards the head, so that it is quite possible for the unborn young be forced out of the mother's mouth, if, as often happens, her body has been shattered by shot or battered by a stick; for the female adder, unlike the grass snake, does not lay eggs, but brings forth her young alive. And further, though the late Mr. Tegetmeier, through The Field, offered many years ago a prize of £5 for the production of convincing evidence that female adders swallowed their young, the prize was never won. On 20th October 1927 The Field published a short article which stated that one applicant, who wrote that he had seen the last of the brood disappear down its mother's throat, killed the reptile, tied a noose round its neck to prevent the young escaping, and sent it to Dr. Gunther, the then keeper of the Zoological Department of the British Museum. Dr. Gunther dissected it in the presence of the Fellows of the Linnean Society. The stomach of the viper contained a recently swallowed field mouse! Indeed, a ridiculus mus! Its tail had been mistaken for that of a young adder. I am not aware of any later expert pronouncement on the point but I believe that there is as yet no scientific proof that the adder swallows her young.

How, then, can the evidence of so many eye-witnesses of this phenomenon be explained away? One theory is that the supposed swallowing is an optical illusion. The young wriggle towards the mother and endeavour to conceal themselves underneath the folds of her body: the open jaws of the hissing snake and the celerity of the movements of the youngsters create the illusion that they are being swallowed, whereas really they have disappeared into the maternal coils. In fact, the adder performs an involuntary conjuring trick which the human eye cannot follow. Another suggestion is that what has been seen is an act, perhaps occasional, of cannibalism.

I have also seen it objected that it is physically impossible for an adder to swallow her young. I think this objection cuts no ice. Snakes have no breast or collar bones: the ribs, being free at the ends, can be flattened out to allow distention of the body when the prey is swallowed. The bones of the skull, too, are connected so loosely that the head can be widened, so much so that it is stated that the mouth can admit an object three times the size of the snake's head: further, the two halves of the lower jaw are not connected by

bone but by ligaments. A more serious objection is raised by Mr. Douglas St. L. Gordon in Dartmoor in all its Moods (pp. 274-5). He writes:

"The difficulties of belief are numerous..., but most insuperable, perhaps, is the question of time. The act of swallowing even one young viper could scarcely be otherwise than a lengthy proceeding, and if the reptile can indeed absorb its entire family in the space of afew seconds, it must be a singularly gifted creature, particularly when one remembers that the adder is viviparous, its brood numbering as many as fifteen-a liberal mouthful.

letters on the subject. One was from a Williton correspondent, Mr. A. S. Rew: 'I have twice witnessed this event, but many years ago. The first

instance was during my school-days, when proceeding home I saw an adder "basking on a ledge in the hedge in front of an old rabbit burrow. I did not attempt to molest it but stood for a few seconds looking at at, when it suddenly raised its head slightly, made a peculiar grating hiss, which caused a scurry and rustle amongst the grass, etc., immediately surrounding her bed, and out popped five young ones. The five young ones, without any hesitation, wriggled to the front of her, wheeled in perfect order and rotation, darted for her open mouth, and disappeared down her throat so quickly that the whole event was over in about eight seconds.

The second instance happened, curiously enough, within a quarter of a

mile of the first. The adder was basking on the crown of a fairly low hedge. The same noise was uttered, the same movements executed by the young, this time four in number. The size of the young in each case was about the same, that is approximately three to three and a half inches long. The second event was witnessed about 1925 or 1926, the first about 1912.

There is no question of the happening being an optical illusion. My first view was from the front, my second from the side-front, and in both cases I had a clear view of the ground or earth immediately behind the adder. I did not attempt to kill the adder.'

The similarity between the two accounts is obvious: they both stress the regularity of the movements of the young adders. Mr. Hanks' observation of the working of the old adder's jaw is of exceptional interest, for it is similar to the reptile's action when swallowing its prey. Some years ago I was walking with my wife along a shady lane the last place where you would expect to find an adder on a hot day and stepped over it without seeing it. My wife saw it and called out to me. It was stretched across the path, in the act of swallowing a fledgling. The bird's head and shoulders were already inside its gullet; the swelling caused by the skull was quite visible. But for the fact that its mouth was full, it might have struck at me as I stepped over it. Seeing us, it disgorged its prey, and slithered off to the shelter of a hole in a wall. Examining the y young observe the snake's modus operandi. The nestling's head and shoulders were covered with saliva, and drawn out from the rest of the body. bird more closely, we could The legs trailed behind; once the adder's gape was widened enough to admit the head, the rest would be easy. As I have explained above,

the adder's mouth, skull and skeleton are ingeniously adapted to the swallowing process. Mr. Hanks' account suggests that the adder when swallowing its young acts in the same way as when it swallows its prey.

I have also before me two other circumstantial reports of an adder

swallowing her young, which follow, mutatis mutandis, the accounts set out in detail above. In each instance the adder was violently killed: in once case the body was opened with a penknife and the young taken out alive and in the other they were squeezed out of the carcass and wriggled away. I have no doubt of the accuracy of these statements. But, as I have already mentioned, the adder's oviduct extends some two thirds of her length towards the head; a scientist would at once refuse to accept these instances as proof on the ground that, as the carcass had been violently treated, it is impossible to say definitely whether the young were in the gullet or in the oviduct. Reading the vivid statements of the eye witnesses in these cases, I am of a different opinion. But for the reasons given I do not quote these accounts in full.

That the adder swallows her young has not been scientifically proved: still less has it been disproved. I find it difficult to believe that all the recorded instances, some of them related by educated people, are illusions, optical or otherwise. I prefer to keep an open mind; and I have Gilbert White on my side. For, of the woodcock carrying its young, which he doubted, he wrote: 'But candour forbids me to say absolutely that any fact is false because I have never been witness to such a fact."

Finally, I would ask anyone who sees or thinks he sees-an adder swallow her young, to kill her as painlessly as possible (a smart blow with a stick where the head joins the body will cause instant death), tie a noose tightly round the neck and send the carcass to the keeper of the Zoological Department of the British Museum for expert examination.

You hear curious tales on Exmoor about bites of adders, and their remedies. An old woman was bitten one day on the leg. A friend visited the spot a few days after, at the hour when she had been bitten, and killed the adder. From its body he extracted an oil which, applied to the bitten place, effected a complete cure. Nevertheless the anniversary of the bite was always celebrated by a swelling on the lady's leg, which uncannily took an adder's shape.

One day in May I saw an adder crossing the road in Horner, near Por-

lock. The road was thick with dust and the reptile evidently found it difficult to get any purchase, for it made but slow progress until it reached the herbage across the road. It left a track about two inches broad, and in the middle was a sharp, wavy indentation such as is seen in worm-tracks, probably caused by contractions of the muscles. Marks of the segments of the snake's body were also visible. As the creature crawled in the dust its forked tongue shot in and out: surely here is the origin of 'dust shalt thou eat'.

_____

# Volcanoes as Sea Monsters

## Ulrich Magin

Cryptozoologists tell us that experienced local observers will never mistake a log for a water monster. Yet there is evidence some mistook a volcanic eruption for one!

Late in 1817, a sea monster appeared to some fishermen off the coast of Calabria, the tip of Italy's boot, which seems to kick Sicily.

According to "The Adams Centinel" (1):

"SEA MONSTER. – Letters from Marseilles state that a sea monster, of enormous dimensions, has been seen on the coast of Calabria. Some fishermen perceiving a fire in the sea, and thinking that it was a coasting vessel which was in need of assistance, approached the monster whose motion caused a phosphorick light, which was what they had mistaken for a fire. – They soon perceived a thick smoke, heard a hollow bellowing sound, and the agitation of the waves was such, that the boats were obliged to return precipitately to shore. According to this account the monster raised itself to a prodigious height, and then plunged itself into the waves, so, that though the night was very calm, they were covered with the spray." (2)

This story appeared in quite a couple of newspapers and magazines of the period. The earliest mention seems to have been in the "Literary Gazette" of 31 January 1818, the source used by Bernard Heuvelmans in his book "In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents". This seems to be the source all other magazines and newspapers have copied. The incident, therefore, must have taken place toward the end of 1817 or very early in January 1818.

Heuvelmans thought it had been a simple hoax (3) "It is amusing to see how this fantastic tale of a modern leviathan of the Italian coast is attributed to a French source by their old enemies the English."

I think Heuvelmans is wrong in ascribing this incident to a hoax. The story of the Calabria fishermen sounds familiar – not to biologists, however, but to geologists. It sounds like the eruption of an underwater volcano.

Referring to the Greek island volcano Thera, for example, the Greek historian Strabo (1, 57) describes the appearance of a new island between the main island and Therasia in 197 BC in almost the same words: First, fire issued from the sea, so that the water boiled and made roaring noises. Then, an island came out of the sea in a form of a glowing mass "as if it were pushed up."

Later eruptions of Thera were associated with white water (1866) or roaring noises and smoke that issued out of the sea (1941). (4)

This explanation appears to be valid – the Strait of Messina is well known for earthquakes, and several active volcanoes – such as Mount Etna and Stromboli – are situated in the region. Yet, for this explanation to work, there must have been volcanic activities at the time. Actually, newspapers reported severe earth tremors.

There was no documented seismic or volcanic activity in the Sicily-Calabria region in November and December 1817 precisely. However, „On the 15th of April 1817 a severe shock terrified the people of Caltagirone in Valdinoto, and of the neighbouring places [in Sicily]." (5).

Then, towards the end of 1817, and in February 1818, all hell broke loose. The "Courrier de la Louisiane", for example, writes on 13 July 1818 about the recent earth quakes in Italy and Sicily that "the sea, in many places, invaded its shores and destroyed every thing in its way." And in a summary of the events we learn: "… another slight shock was felt in the night of the 18th October 1817. But on the 20th of February 1818, at ten minutes past one o'clock, Italian time, the sky being serene, the moon shining bright, the air calm and temperate, not only the city of Catania, but the whole region which surrounds Etna, experienced a most violent convulsion, which occasioned great devastation in the towns and villages of that country, and extended to almost all Sicily, to Calabria, and even to Malta. […] Some signs had preceded this formidable phenomenon. On the morning of that day the sea appeared calm; but from the effect of an invisible current, it dashed violently against the shores and shoals. The fishermen felt themselves as if repelled by an unseen force when they attempted to approach the rocks partly covered by the water, which latter appeared to them to be sensibly warm. In the afternoon the waters of the Darsena were extremely low, and yet the waves approached from time to time with such violence, that passing the mole and the wall which rises above it, they broke on the opposite

side as in a tempest. In lofty houses the bells rang of their own accord, and bodies freely suspended began to oscillate." (6)

The 20 February 1818 earthquake had its epicentre at Catania. On 1 March 1818, the occasion of the next quake, the epicentre lay below the Monti Iblei. (7)

We can compare the 1818 tale with the events of November 2002, at Panarea, one of the volcanic Aeolian Islands off Calabria, when fishermen reported large areas of white water which appeared to boil and smelled of sulpher, and which were caused by underwater fumaroles at a depth of 15 metres. (9) The eruption of gases was accompanied by "islets forming a small archipelago." (10)

As a trigger for a sea serpent sighting, an underwater volcano is certainly unique. While I do not know of a second sea serpent report that might also be explained in this way, there is at least one USO sighting which closely resembles it.

## The Nisyros USO

There are only a few reports of underwater UFOs from Greece, and the incident of the night of 15 January 1985 is among them. In the sea between Nisyros and Tilos islands, Dodecanese, "the pilot of a civilian airplane reported a 'large fire accompanied by explosions' in the sea. The "fire" was also observed by two people from the coast of Nisyros island and by the captain of the passing ship 'Zeta' who said that the 'fire' was in the sea area somewhere East of Astypalaia island. Airplanes searched the area but found nothing. Later it was announced that the cause of the phenomenon was a small fire in a field, at the coast of Tilos.' (11)

Nisyros is one of four active Greek volcanoes – Methana, Milos, Thera, and Nisyros. No longer spouting lava, it is known for hydrothermal eruptions, the last of which occurred in 1871, 1873, and 1887; while earthquakes shook the island (which lies just south of Cos) last in 1953, 1961, 1968-70, and 1995-98. During one of the last eruptions, on 11 September 1873, "a few yards from the shore, the sea turned a whitish colour; it emitted torrents of steam, mixed with hydrogen sulphide." (12)

With such a danger present, it would have been very unwise for the Greek authorities not to follow any report of smoke issuing from the sea – but it was highly unlikely that anybody had UFOs in mind. Clearly, the Greek did not investigate this incident because they thought that Martians had landed, but because they had to check whether there was a real danger to shipping due to very hazadous natural forces.

In the world of forteana, things can get as bizarre as this – a fire in a field, feared to be a sign of volcanic danger to shipping routes, which finally goes down into the annals as a submarine UFO!

**Notes:**

1. *The Adams Centinel*, 22 April 1818, p. 4.

2. Similar reports also appeared in George Augustus Frederick Fitzclarence: *The Literary Gazette.* Nr 54 of 31 January 1818, p. 78, and *Niles' Weekly Register*, 18 April 1818, p. 132.

3. Heuvelmans, *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents.* New York: Hill & Wang 1968, p. 164.

4. J.V. Luce: *Atlantis*. Bergisch Gladbach: Gustav Lübbe 1975, p. 158-160.

5. *Philosophical Magazine* vol 65, 1825, p. 173.

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7. Gerassimos A. Papadopoulos and Anna Fokaefs: Strong Tsunamis in the Mediterranean Sea: A Re-Evaluation. *ISET Journal of Earthquake Technology*, Paper No. 463, Vol. 42, No. 4, December 2005, pp. 159-170; Raffaele Azzaro and Maria Serafina Barbano: Analysis of the seismicity of Southeastern Sicily: a proposed tectonic interpretation. *Annali di Geofisica*, vol. 43, Nr. 1, 2000, pp. 171-188; Stefano Tinti and Alessandra Maramai: Catalogue of tsunamis generated in Italy and in Cote d'Azur, France: a Step towards a unified catalogue of tsunamis in Europe. *Annali di Geofisica*, vol. xxxix, N. 6, December 1996, 1253ff., p.1266.

9. Marco Bianchini: *USOCAT*. Edizioni Upiar, 2nd. ed., 2003, p. 153

10. A. Esposito et al.: 2008 Ground deformation at the Panarea

volcano (Aeolian island, Italy) during 2002-2006 measured by gps and structural analysis. *Geophysical Research Abstracts*, Vol. 10, 2008.

11. *Nea* 17 January 1985, *Messimvrini* 17 January 1985, quoted after waterufo.net

12. G. E. Vougioukalakis: *Blue Volcanoes: Nisyros*. Nisyros Regional Council 1998, eruption in sea, p. 41; quakes, p. 62.

# A Soviet view of the Abominable Snowman in the 1960s Part 1

## Thanks to Gary Mangiacopra for this information

## From Sputnik Monthly Digest Issue 3 1967

### The Abominable Snowman….Scientific hypothesis or imagination run riot?

### Allah and the shaitans

"Among the people of the Caucasus a popular belief has existed for centuries—that evil spirits, called shaitans ,roam the mountains. These spirits are being punished by Allah for having tried at some remote time to climb into heaven. Since then they are fated to wander the earth, frightening true believers. If you meet one of them, it is best to leave him in peace, otherwise he will take revenge and bring misfortune on your house. The best tactic is to go away from the shaitan and tell no one that you met him. If the shaitan asks you for food and clothing, obey his request to avoid his anger.

The tale about Allah punishing the shaitans is current to this day in the Caucasus. The reason? Well,it seems that from time to time people from many Caucasian villages, believe it or not, do meet shaitans!

**The hairy night visitor** At a session of the Geographical Society of the USSR one of the members ,Jeanne Koffman,reported on the

results of a five year search for “wild men” in the Caucasian region. She presented 219 records of talks with eyewitnesses, made during nine expeditions to barely ccessible mountain areas.

The descriptions were graphic. And so a group of journalists accompanied Jeanne Koffman to the region. One of the first testimonies we heard was that of Dina Didanov , a man highly respected in his village. We were completely convinced of this sincerity. Here is his story: “Last spring I travelled to the mountain pastures. I had supper with the shepherds and bedded down for the night in their camp. .

The Caucasus region of Russia. Wikipedia Creative Commons

The man next to me was very restless. He would fall asleep and then wake up again and smoke.

That`s why I couldn`t fall asleep for a long time.”Suddenly I saw a hand parting the flaps of our tent. A strange hairy animal appeared on the threshold. It peered about cautiously ,then withdrew. Terribly frightened, I nudged my neighbour and asked,`What was that?` “Eh,” he replied ` pay no attention. If you come around here oftener you`ll see more than that. That`s an *almasti* `.And he calmly dozed off. “But there was no sleep for me. The tent flaps parted again and the thing entered. I screwed up my eyes, feigning sleep, but kept watching even though I was scared stiff. After a wary look at us, the thing squatted beside the pots of food. Lifting the lids, it began to eat, gulping the food and glancing our way constantly to see if we were asleep. Then it stood up, silently replaced the lids on both pots, and walked to a peg on one wall. Removing a bridle from the peg it inspected it carefully ,returned it to its place and slipped out of the tent.

“I waited impatiently for dawn to come. With the first streak of light I jumped up and examined the pots. There was no doubt about it: the amount of food had greatly diminished.”

## Unsuccessful ambushes

Stories are only stories after all, and we journalists wanted things to happen. We had barely settled ourselves around the fire one evening when a blast from an auto horn reached us, and a voice cried,” Get ready immediately ,a `wild man` has been seen not far from here.”

When told where we were going, we were amazed, for it appeared that the “wild man” had been seen in a village on a busy highway. Every day buses carrying passengers from Pyatigorsk to Mineralniye Vody run along this road.We arrived at the village in pitch darkness at 3 a.m ., too late to question people or begin a search. But early in

the morning we were surrounded by excited villagers—Kabardins,Balkars and Russians-all all eager to tell their stories, interrupting one another as they did so.An almasti,they said, had been visiting the settlement during the past four days.

The first eyewitness had been Aubekir Bekanov, a Kabardin. Returning from a late movie he saw a shadowy figure standing by the fence. Bekanov turned on his flashlight and found himself face to face with a hairy man-like creature. He stood rooted to the ground, looking at the thing, while it in turn stared at him without moving. When he finally made a motion the *almasti* cleared the fence in one bound and disappeared into the orchard.

Next morning two girls,Valya,11,and Zoya,12,went to the orchard to feast on cherries. One of them climbed a tree and suddenly noticed a half-bent hairy arm shaking the trunk of a tree nearby. “Mother!” she screamed and tumbled down at her friend`s feet. The other girl, who had also seen the hairy arm, was just as frightened ,and the two of them rushed blindly home.

That same day the hairy “guest” was seen by different people in the village orchards at one, three and four o`clock in the afternoon. Since nothing like it had ever been seen there before, the villagers were in an uproar. During the three days prior to our arrival the *almasti* was glimpsed by nine persons at various times. Attempts to capture the creature failed; each time he would disappear in the big orchards or in fields of six-foot high corn.

So much for the stories. And what about the journalists? Well, we stayed in the settlement five days and set up various ambushes, but didn`t even get a glimpse of the “wild man”.

## The maid who refused to wear clothes

A few days after our return to Moscow another interesting report

reached us. In the Caucasian village of Tkhina a grave, evidently that of a female of the "wild men" was opened. There is an interesting legend connected with the grave. It seems that more than a century ago a certain Genaba left Tkhina to visit his friend Prince Achba.He returned home with a gift– a human-like being the prince had caught while hunting in the woods.

Zana,as the creature was named, was kept by Genaba for several years tethered in a hut specially woven from twigs and grasses . At first she was guarded, but in time she became used to people and was freed. Zana obeyed only her master, and he taught her to carry wood, water and sacks of grain. Zana was of enormous build and her body was covered in thick black hair. She never learned to talk ,only mumbled and squealed. Zana had two favourite pass times: all year round she bathed in the spring that still bears her name, and she would spend hours fussing about with rocks, trying to chip them. She refused to wear clothes and only with greatest difficulty was trained to wear a loin cloth.

Zana died in the 1880s,and the entire village attended her funeral. Nestor Sabekia, Kuona Kurkunava, Mikava Tsvizhba and other old-timers who are still hale and hearty were present at that funeral, and it was they who told us the story.

What is particularly interesting is that the description of Zana coincides with accounts by inhabitants of other districts in the Caucasus of similar creatures they have seen in our own times.

An examination of Zana`s skeleton showed that the features were not exactly Neanderthal ,and it was impossible to arrive at positive conclusions regarding the existence or otherwise of "wild men". But experts are greatly interested in some peculiarities of its construction.

## The unsolved riddle

Today not only Soviet investigators but British,American and Mongol as well, are on the hunt for live specimens of the “wild men,” sometimes called “snow men”. American experts discovered a hand of this creature, and it has been scientifically examined in many countries, including the USSR.The unanimous opinion is that it was the hand of a man-like creature of the Neanderthal type. In 1962 an international committee composed of representatives from 16 countries was set up to try to solve the riddle of the wild, hairy, man-like creatures. That body is still functioning , but irrefutable proof of the existence of the creatures eludes it.

Many people believe that the riddle will eventually be solved through a sensational discovery. Someone will capture or kill an “abominable snowman” and the real study of the creature will begin at that moment. But other scientists , a minority but one that includes practically all the experts in this field, believe that the captured specimen will simply corroborate the already existing hypothesis.

This hypothesis, put forward by Professor Boris Porshnev, assumes the Neanderthal origin of the “wild man”.

Ancient bones that have lain in the earth for 500,000 to 700,000 years made it possible for scientists to fairly accurately reproduce the features of man-like creatures that lived on the earth at that time. They were about the same height as human beings, and had stooped shoulders and long arms. They did not speak, but only uttered inarticulate sounds. They did not know how to make fire, but in contrast to other animals they were not afraid of it and warmed themselves by accidentally created fires, such as caused by lightening storms. They fed on roots, leaves, wild fruits and berries, and also caught small animals and ate carrion. If they possessed any tools, these were of the most primitive kind, but they were adroit at throwing stones and sticks.

Part of them “became human” but what happened to those who did not take the human path of development? Did they die out? Until recently it was held that such ape-men became extinct many millennia ago.

Prof.Porshnev after analysing all the testimony about the “wild men” (scientists have already collected more than 2,000 eyewitness accounts) has come to a different conclusion. He considers that in certain regions of the earth, due to specific conditions ,our ancestors –the Neanderthal species-could have survived. While some, having

learned to labour ,became humans, others became “set", so to say, and did not develop any further. It is possible that little by little they even lost their embryonic habits of work which their ancestors possessed .Such ape-men have been spared by time.

It may appear improbable at first glance that “wild men” could survive to the present day and remain unknown to science. But during recent decades we have witnessed the discovery of a whole series of large animals previously unknown to man.

It was only in 1898 that European scientists learned about the huge carnivorous brown bear, although hunters in Kamchatka,Manchuria and Sakhalin had long told tales about the beast. The existence of the white rhinoceros, the largest land animal next to the African elephant, first became known in 1900.The largest of the apes, the mountain gorilla, was discovered in 1901.And yet stories of these huge beasts had been circulating among local inhabitants in the various areas for ages…

**TO BE CONTINUED**

# Do cuckoos hibernate?

Edgar P Chance's book " The Truth about the Cuckoo" pp. 188-9:

Here's Chance's quote: "I cannot leave the subject of the young cuckoo without drawing attention to the seemingly callous behaviour of its fosterers towards their own offspring. Their whole attention and parental care are given to the interloper without the slightest regard for their own ejected nestlings gasping out their lives, often within inches of their rightful home and brooding parent. "Do cuckoos ever hibernate-and in England? The suggestion seems laughable, and yet a hard-headed Birmingham solicitor friend of mine, Walter Goodrick Clarke, introduced me a few years ago to an old wagoner, of whose integrity my friend had no doubt whatever. This old man took me to an old Dutch barn, near Barnt Green, where a year or so previously, when cutting hay in January, he came upon what he declared was a young cuckoo tucked away in the hay. The most incredible part of the tale was that the bird was naked, though surrounded by its own feathers, as though they had moulted off. When first exposed, the bird was alive, but within a few minutes it died, apparently from its premature exposure. The old man appeared to take himself and his extraordinary tale quite seriously, but could not suggest how the bird would have provided itself with new feathers upon emergence from hibernation. He declared that once before-in Gloucestershire-he had an exactly similar experience, either in January or February. "The idea was that a late-hatched young cuckoo might seek this refuge rather than face late migration alone indeed, the old man was almost inclined to think that hibernation was the normal practice of cuckoos. "The whole story seems too absurd to record, but the old man struck me as being too honest and simple-minded to have stooped to pure invention. And being a man of the soil, he could not have mistaken a bat for a young cuckoo, as one would think. story? What is the

explanation of this? Thanks to **Bob Skinner** for providing this. The following pages are from Hendy SOMERSET BIRDS AND SOME OTHER FOLK pp 94-5

At intervals newspaper correspondence recurs about the alleged hibernation of cuckoos. In that quaint old book, Ray's edition of Willughby's Ornithology, published 1687, there are two stories relating to this. According to one of these a Zurich man, having laid a log on the fire in winter, heard a 'cuckow'. "The other story tells how when some servants cast some old rotten willows into a furnace they heard 'a "cuckow" singing three times'. On the willow being pulled out of the fire and cut open, they drew out first 'meer feathers' but later a living cuckoo entirely bear of plumage; it was said to have lived two years. "Bewick, in his Introduction to his History of British Birds (1799 Edition) relates how a few years previously a young cuckoo was found in the thickest part of 'a close whin bush'; when taken out was alive, but, like the one mentioned above, 'quite destitute of feathers'. Being kept warm and carefully fed, it grew fresh plug the next spring it escaped, and flying away, gave its usual call. "In 1923 a correspondent in the Morning Post mentioned a cuckoo being found in the case of a grandfather (not a 'cuckoo') clock in a Shropshire farmhouse. Placed in front of the fire, it woke up, bawled cuckoo once, and so died. "In my press-cutting book I find four other similar cases: dates unfortunately not noted, but the first two were published in Country Life. A cuckoo, caught in summer and kept as a pet, in early winter. In January it was found inside an old boot in a cupboard, quite naked, but surrounded by its moulted feathers. It was alive but sluggish. The second was discovered is winter by a builder, when pulling down an old wall, in a ball in the brickwork. It was in exactly the same condition as the bird found in the boot. The third was uncovered by a stonemason, when demolishing an ancient cottage, in an old nest under the eaves; it, too, was covered by its own shed feathers. The fourth was a cuckoo reared and

kept in a cage. It disappeared at the end of the summer: later the owner found that the bird had buried itself in the old straw at the bottom of the cage; it also was covered with its own discarded feathers. The two last-mentioned cuckoos both died within half an hour of being exposed. "I myself was told a similar story by a Somerset man some twenty five years ago. He was carting stone from a quarry in November, and saw the quarrymen unearth a live cuckoo curled up in a ball in a cavity in the rock. There seemed to be a kind of film over its eyes, and here again, when handled all its feathers came off. "I do not suppose that any of the birds mentioned in these stories were really hibernating, i.e. sleeping out the winter. I suspect that they were late-hatched young cuckoos; it is a pity that the feathers were not preserved in any instance so that this might be ascertained. When overtaken by the cold they would crawl into shelter. If undiscovered they would not have survived. The fact that their feathers came out points to a very low state of animation." stone from a quarry in November, and saw the quarrymen unearth a live cuckoo curled up in a ball in a cavity in the rock. There seemed to be a kind of film over its eyes, and here again, when handled all its feathers came off. "I do not suppose that any of the birds mentioned in these stories were really hibernating, i.e. sleeping out the winter. I suspect that they were late-hatched young cuckoos; it is a pity that the feathers were not preserved in any instance so that this might be ascertained. When overtaken by the cold they would crawl into shelter. If undiscovered they would not have survived. The fact that their feathers came out points to a very low state of animation."

# Rainbows around the eyes

## Fate July 1960

## Thanks to Gary Mangiacopra for this

(Report from the readers Fate July 1960) Nicholas P Debelo . There is a large mirror on our living room mantelpiece and each day I look into it more or less accidentally. Today (March 19,1960) I was watching television and I got up to change the channel. As I did so I looked at myself in the mirror and was shocked to see rainbow circles around my eyes. The colors were dark blue on my eyeballs and going outward they were white ,then yellow,then orange,and the outermost color was vivid red! The circles were large, about the diameter of a doughnut

Depiction of a rainbow in Genesis by Joseph Anton Koch. Wikipedia Creative Commons.

# ON THE TRAIL OF NEW GUINEA'S STRIPED FELINE MYSTERY BEASTS

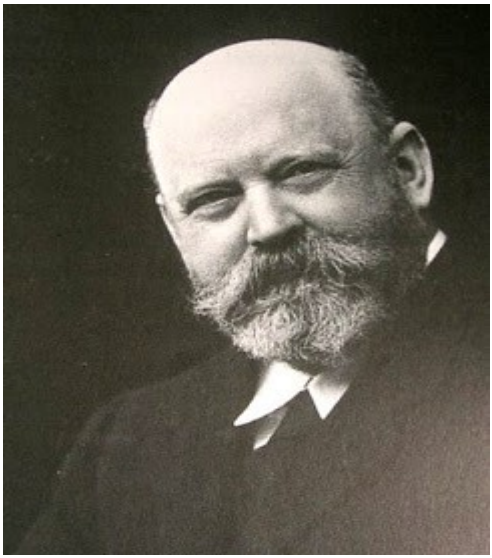
## Dr Karl Shuker Shuker Nature March 21st 2021

**Spectacular figurine portraying the possible appearance in life of the Queensland tiger or yarri if real and constituting an extant species of thylacoleonid; owned by Australian cryptozoologist Rebecca Lang, it was created by Sean Cooper and constructed/ painted by Jeff Johnson (© Rebecca Lang/Sean Cooper/Jeff Johnson)**

There are no native marsupial or eutherian felids living in New Guinea – or are there?

The Queensland tiger or yarri is a large, striped, cat-headed mystery beast long claimed (but still not confirmed) to exist in this region of Australia, and some cryptozoological researchers have speculated that if it does indeed exist, this exceedingly elusive creature may conceivably be a living species of thylacoleonid or marsupial lion, officially believed to have become extinct many millennia ago (see my three mystery cat books for more details). Referring to this feline cryptid in their book *The Wild Animals of Australasia* (1926), Albert S. le Souef and Henry Burrell included the following tantalisingly brief snippet:

We have had a striped carnivorous animal described from Northwest Australia, and Lord Rothschild states, from native reports, that a similar animal exists also in New Guinea.



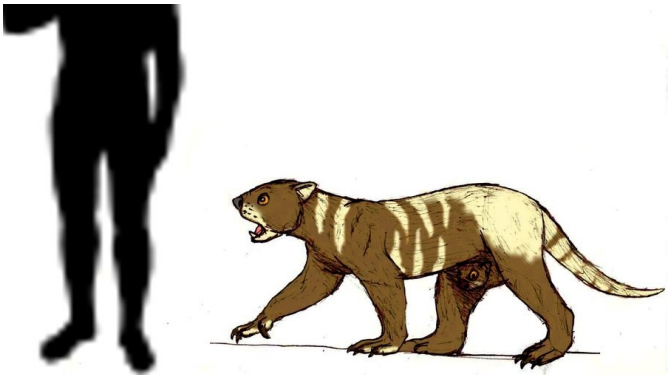
**Lord Walter Rothschild (public domain)**

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, eminent British zoologist Lord Walter Rothschild FRS (1868-1937) amassed a truly immense personal museum of natural history specimens (the largest ever owned by a private individual), and he sponsored many naturalists and collectors to scour the world (including New Guinea's vast little-explored jungle realms) in search of more. These searches in turn led to the scientific discovery, and subsequent formal description by Rothschild, of many important new animal species. His museum subsequently formed the basis of what is now the Natural History Museum of Tring in Hertfordshire, England which is the repository of much of the vast collection of bird specimens owned by London's Natural History Museum.

Over the years, I've read a fair few of Rothschild's papers and books, but so far I have yet to uncover in any of his publications the source of the above-quoted information attributed to him by le Souef and Burrell. So if any reader happens to know this source, I'd be very grateful indeed to receive details.

Moreover, Rothschild's rumoured riddle is not the only feline cryptid (indeed, not even the only striped feline cryptid) reported from New Guinea. I know of at least two others, very different from one another morphologically, but equally memorable – albeit once again for very different reasons.

**Are there striped (possibly even marsupial) feline cryptids awaiting formal discovery in New Guinea? (© Connor Lachmanec aka TheMorlock)**



Very intrigued by Esther's account, Smith contacted Australian mammalogist Dr Tim Flannery, an expert on New Guinea fauna, and asked his opinion as to what she may have seen. Dr Flannery deemed it likely that her mystery beast had been a tree kangaroo, but Esther, born and raised in New Guinea and regularly returning there for visits as an adult, was very familiar with the appearance of such animals, and did not agree with this identification of the creature that she had seen. Could it have been the New Guinea version of the Queensland tiger as claimed by Rothschild?

**Issued jointly in 1996 by Indonesia and Australia, a philatelic First Day Cover featuring on its left-hand side an illustration of the dingiso – a very distinctive species of black-and-white tree kangaroo native to New Guinea's Indonesian western half, yet which remained undiscovered and undescribed by science until as recently as the 1990s (© Indonesian Postal Service/© Australian Postal Service – reproduced here on a strictly non-commercial Fair Use basis for educational/review purposes only)**

With no known large-sized mammalian predators other than imported canine forms, such as the nowadays exceedingly rare New Guinea singing dog, ecologically speaking it would not be inconceivable for an elusive feline cryptid to thrive here, plentifully supplied with wallabies, tree kangaroos, possums, rodents, bird life, and other potential prey species. How ironic it would be if the Queensland tiger, or something very like it, was ultimately discovered not in Australia but in

-stead in its more mysterious northern neighbour, New Guinea. I documented the first of these latter two in my book ***Cats of Magic, Mythology, and Mystery*** (2012). On 11 November 2011, Australian cryptozoological researcher Malcolm Smith's internet blog, Malcolm's Musings, contained a fascinating post in which he reported that one of his neighbours, Esther Ingram, who had been born to missionary parents in New Guinea, once observed an apparent mystery cat at close range there when revisiting this great island mini-continent as an adult. Her sighting occurred one evening during December 1999/January 2000 at a distance of only 20 yards away when the creature emerged from some jungle and crossed the road ahead while she and her father were being driven by her foster-brother in the Eastern Highlands province of Papua New Guinea (PNG). According to Esther's description as recorded by Smith, the creature was:

…very solidly built, and the head-body length was about five feet. Both Esther and her father were amazed at how huge it was...Esther, in particular, made an attempt to study as many details as possible. (Remember, it was very close.) The basic colour was white, with ginger "trimmings" on the tail and ears. Pale gingery, vertical stripes, not terribly well delineated, appeared on the sides, but they did not extend to the back, or dorsal surface, which was completely pale. She specifically noted that the forepaws were cat-like, rather than (say) hoofed like a goat's. She didn't get a glance at the rear paws. The tail was ginger and very long, hanging to the ground. I enquired about bushiness etc, to establish a comparison with a dog's. She said it was a bit coarser or fluffier than the body, but not much. On the body itself, the fur was smooth. The head was broad, short, flattish, and definitely cat-like. It did not protrude like a dog's. The ears were ginger, mottled with white, and hung down. They were not as long as a spaniel's, but they were definitely long and rounded, and gave every indication of being naturally floppy. It was this feature which amazed both of them

and me as well, as it doesn't sound anything like a cat's). Esther also thought she saw whiskers. The third of this latter island's reported feline cryptids is more famous, but for all the wrong reasons. Supposedly referred to locally as the moolah, it is just one of several very remarkable beasts that were said to exist here by Captain J.A. Lawson in his notorious book *Wanderings in the Interior of New Guinea* (1875). According to Lawson, he had landed here in 1871, and among his truly extraordinary alleged discoveries were the world's highest mountain (dubbed by him Mount Hercules, and far taller than Everest, yet which could be climbed in just a day!), very large monkey-like ape-men, enormous herds of deer and buffalo numbering in their thousands, the world's tallest tree, flightless birds resembling ostriches or emus, and, his pièce de resistance, the moolah, a specimen of which he supposedly shot and which was ostensibly one and the same as India's Bengal tiger! Here is Lawson's description of his freshly-killed moolah:

This animal was formed exactly like the Indian tiger, nor was it inferior in size; but it was a much handsomer creature. It was marked with black and chestnut stripes, on a white, or nearly white, ground. Its length from the nose to the root of the tail was seven feet three inches.

★ FEATURES ★

*Move over, Munchausen, for bold Captain J. A. Lawson and his . . .*

**Taller-than-Everest Adventures**

By A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

WHILE THE WORLD has been acclaiming Sir Edmund Hillary's praiseworthy feat in the Himalayas, there has been a continued and extraordinary silence about Captain J. A. Lawson, a British explorer and naturalist who, a full 80 years ago, discovered, measured, named and climbed most of the way up the world's highest mountain—Mt. Hercules, 32,783 feet, no less, in Papua—and then wrote a book about it.

"I had a long dagger-knife in my waist belt, and . . . drove it up to the hilt in the creature's side."

**The opening headlines and accompanying sketch from an extensive article (click here to access it) recalling the Munchhausenesque history of Captain J.A. Lawson that appeared in Sydney's *Sunday Herald* newspaper on 23 August 1953 (© *Sunday Herald*, Sydney – reproduced here on a strictly non-commercial fair use basis for educational/review purposes only)**

On fundamental zoogeographical grounds alone, however, Lawson's claims regarding the existence in New Guinea of the moolah and the other creatures listed above were arrant nonsense. Yet, incredibly, for some years afterwards they were widely accepted as gospel, until continued explorations of New Guinea finally confirmed the entire content of Lawson's book to be fictional – indeed, a veritable Munchausenesque satire on the whole concept of Victorian exploration – rather than anything remotely factual.

As for the true identity of the mysterious Captain himself, this has never been conclusively established. However, the most popular suggestion is that Lawson was actually Robert H. Armit (1844-?), a lieutenant in the Royal Navy with experience as an assistant surveyor in Australian waters, and later Honorary Secretary of the New Guinea Colonising Association.

In any event, for those of you who may have heard about Lawson's New Guinea tiger but not known of its history, you can at least rest assured now that there is no longer any need to mull over the moolah!

**Indian tigers frequenting the forests of New Guinea?? I don`t think so!! (public domain)**[1] COMMENT:SIMON MARCH 21 2021 I find the Thylacoleo fascinating, especially considering that in many ways it was even more outlandish a creature than the Thylacine... and people also keep seeing Thylacoleos even today. Way outside of Australia too, yet it remains much more obscure.

# Bunyip of Thargomindah: Mystery animal caught in a media circus

## Loes Modderman

**On 2 August 1941, the *Courier Mail* broke the news that for several months, a mysterious creature had been sighted lurking in Lake Dynevor, just outside Thargomindah, a small outback Queensland town located 1,100 kilometres west of Brisbane. News of the Thargomindah Bunyip quickly spread and soon newspapers across the east coast were updating readers on the latest news of the mysterious lake monster.**

In what would seem highly unlikely in today's *headline today, history tomorrow*, 24-hour news cycle, the story of the Thargomindah Bunyip carried on for months following the initial reports. There were reports of photos taken, speculation of a whole family of bunyips, search parties organised, search parties postponed due to politics, protectors assigned, and some wild speculation as to the true nature of the unknown beast and how it came to inhabit a remote lake in the middle of the outback.

*Search Parties For Dynevor 'Bunyip'* the *Courier Mail's* initial article reported that: "Parties from Thargomindah have gone to Dynevor Lake to search for the strange creature that is said to inhabit the large expanse of water on Dynevor Downs. Several people had been able to get within 200 yards of it, said the Thargomindah Shire clerk (Mr. W. Speedy) yesterday. Some reports said its body was between three and four feet long and others that it was the size of a bulldog. But its identity was still in doubt because each time it had eluded pursuers by disappearing into the rushes.

"He said that reports about a mysterious animal living in the lake had been circulating in the district for months, but until recently they had not been taken seriously. Now it had been established definitely that it did exist everyone was anxious to be the first to solve the mystery."

On the same day, *The Mail* also reported the story with the headline: *Townspeople Say 'Bunyip' Frolics in Inland Lake.*
"About a dozen of Thargomindah's population of 290 swear that they have seen the Bulloo River bunyip, the mystery of which is still unsolved.
"The people claim that they have seen a strange animal frolicking in the Dynevor Lake, some miles east of the town, which is 730 miles west of Brisbane, in a corner bounded by South Australia, New South Wales, and Queensland. Most descriptions tally with that of a seal, but how a seal would get to a saltwater lake 800 miles from the coast has not been explained."
*The Mail* did provide one highly improbable, but nonetheless entertaining, explanation.
"One explanation is that a seagull, one of thousands which flock to the lake, played stork and carried a baby seal from the coast!"And like in many reports of anomalous activity today, there was the tantalising prospect of something being captured on film.
"Recently, a postal Inspector, Mr. J. G. Utz, of Dalby, accompanied by the manager of the lake's outstation, Mr. Curtis, saw some kind of animal splashing in the water near the crossing, and, whipping out a camera, snapped a picture. Until the film is developed, the accuracy of the shooting cannot be gauged.
"Mr. Utz said today that it was not likely that it would show much, as the animal was at least 90 yards away and the dawn light was bad. 'It was nothing like anything I've seen,' he said. 'The head was black and at least a foot long, and the animal was grunting and splashing a lot. From the size of the head I would say it was about 6 feet long. I was told that many years ago a seal was seen in the Dynevor chain of lakes."This one has got me puzzled," Mr Utz told *The Mail*. "Some people in Thargomindah say it's a bunyip, whatever that is."
Perhaps Mr Utz should've gone to his bookshelf and consulted his encyclopaedia, just as one reporter did when researching his article "*Bunyip" In Lake At Thargomindah "Swimming Pig" Seen?* for

Rockhampton's *Morning Bulletin* on 4 August.
"A bunyip is reported to have been seen in Lake Dynevor, Thargomindah, 730 miles west of Brisbane. Thargomindah has described its 'bunyip' as 'a seal,' 'a turtle,' 'a sea lion,' 'a musk duck,' and a 'swimming pig'.
"Twenty people think they have seen it. One man thinks he has photographed it. He is Mr J. G. Utz, a district postal inspector, who clams to have photographed the creature from a distance of 90 yards, while crossing Dynevor Lake, 22 miles from Thargomindah.
"Interviewed by telephone, he described the 'bunyip' as 'something I can't fit into a picture. Its head, which was raised about 12 to 18 inches above the water, reminded me of a seal. Before disappearing in the tall rushes it gave a vigorous grunt and caused a big disturbance in the water.'
"Queensland awaits the development of Mr Utz's camera film in Dalby this week. He has doubts about it. 'The light was far from good at the time, and I do not know whether the negative will be of much value,' he said."

**Fabulous animal said to haunt swamps**

"According to the Australian Encyclopaedia," the article continued, "a 'bunyip' is a fabulous animal supposed to haunt swamps and shallow lakes in Australia and Tasmania, "While there is no evidence for the existence, now or in any age, of a large marsupial otter, such a creature is not unthinkable," says the Encyclopaedia.
"But, even if it did at one time exist, and was the origin of the 'bunyip' legend, its qualities and features have been so confused with those of crocodiles in Queensland and seals on the southern coast that the resulting monster – in which many aboriginal tribes firmly believe – can only be described as fabulous.*

**No figment of the imagination** On 13 August, the *Courier Mail* announced that a search party would attempt to solve the mystery animal of Lake Dynevor.
"A party to search for the bunyip of Lake Dynevor, 22 miles from Thargomindah, will be organised by Mr. G. F. Gooch, owner of Thargomindah station, when he returns from the Brisbane Show. He said yesterday that he proposed to place a net across the neck of water where he had seen the creature in the hope of catching it."The bunyip

resembles a seal, but it was impossible to say what it was, he continued". He saw it in the early morning at a distance of about 80 yards. It disappeared into some rushes near the bank. Mr. Gooch, who s chairman of the Bulloo Shire Council and president of the Western Graziers' Association, will leave for his home on Friday.
Mr Gooch, had earlier told *Queensland Country Life* that the Thargomindah bunyip is "no mere figment of imagination" and that he intended to capture it and "confound the sceptics".

**Whole family of bunyips?**

The *Sunday Mail on* 17 August speculated that there may in fact, be more than one bunyip in *Thargomindah May Have Whole Family Of Bunyips*

"The Thargomindah 'bunyip' – now a well-recognised local identity – startled residents this week by appearing with a mate. Now people are debating the possibilities of the species multiplying.

"Dozens of travellers along the road between Cunnamulla and Thargomindah have pulled into the edge to stalk the mysterious creature in Broken Dam, a continuation of Dynevor Lake. Many passing the spot in the early morning have seen it, but it always vanishes before they get close enough to get an accurate description.

"Last week two of the animals showed themselves at the same time to a party of sightseers. 'They were as alike as two peas, and we weren't seeing double,' said one of the party. 'They were black, about 2ft. 6in. long, with heads like dogs, and very prominent ears. They swirled away as soon as they spotted us. Probably one was male and one female, but we couldn't tell from where we were, about 50 yards away. They looked just the same.'

"Residents hope to organise an expedition to snare the 'bunyip' – or 'bunyips.' They are satisfied that this is the only way the mystery can be solved."

**Politics over bunyips**

But on 24 August, the *Sunday Mail* reported that the search for the

bunyip had been delayed in the name of democracy, in *By-Election Delays Bunyip Search.*

"Thargomindah prefers politics to bunyips. So much so that residents of the township have postponed any organised search for the bunyip – or bunyips – reported to inhabit Dynevor Lake, 22 miles away, until after the Warrego by-election.

An expedition, armed with guns and cameras, was to have gone out today to attempt to snare the strange creature – last described as having 'a head like a mastiff and a tail like a duck' – but when it was learnt that Dr. C. V. Watson Brown, Ex-M.L.A. for Gregory, and independent candidate for the Warrego seat, was going to town to address Thargomindah electors at 1 p.m. it was decided to postpone the search.

"We take our politics seriously here." Thargomindah shire clerk, Mr. W. Speedy, told the *Sunday Mail*. "We can look for bunyips any old time, but there's an election only every three years – Providence willing."

In Burnie, Tasmania, the *Advocate* got in on the growing media circus on 27 August with the sensational claim that the Mayor of Toowoomba had actually shot a "bunyip" many years earlier."The Mayor of Toowoomba (Alderman J. D. Annand) claims to have shot a 'bunyip' at Felton, 40 years ago," the *Advocate* announced.

"As an alternative, he describes it as a moss duck. 'The moss duck is a queer creature,' the Mayor said. 'It has a very large head and short neck. When it appears above water the head is doubled into the breast, giving the appearance of a large, shaggy animal's head, surmounted by two pointed ears. Those who know the bird have never seen it fly. It dives and reappears anything from 20 to 50 yards away. It is very rare, and possibly the bunyips reported in Broken Dam, near Thargomindah, are moss ducks.'"

**Keepers of the bunyip appointed**

At rhe beginning of September, it was reported that Mr Gooch and another man, J. D. M. McLaren, manager of Dynevor Downs station, had been appointed "Keepers of the Thargomindah bunyip" by the Executive Council. "Officially, they will be known as protectors of fauna in the Dynevor Lakes sanctuary, reported the *Courier Mail*, on

5 September.
Several days later, Carnavon's *Northern Times,* reported further that "the bunyip can only be shot with a camera," and provided yet another interesting description of the animalnteresting description of the animal.
"Mr. R. R. Smith, of Thyangra, who claims to have seen the 'bunyip,' said it was about three feet long, two feet six inches around the body, representing a football in shape, but tapering to the head and tail.
"The head was like that of a pug dog, but more pointed, and appeared to have strings or fibres hanging down from the upper lip. Its colour was mousy brown, with a definite polish, and it seemed to be rather inquisitive."
And that's were the media interest in the Thargomindah bunyip appeared to end. No further reports of sightings, search parties or captures. And whatever happened to that photo taken by Mr Utz? Following the initial excitement of the newspapers in the photo, sadly, it was not reported on again. Most likely it turned out to be just another blurry image taken too far away to be of any value.
The more things change, the more they remain the same

# The Wampus Cat

**by Kate Shaw of Strange Animals Podcast**

**(strangeanimalspodcast.blubrry.net)**

The wampus cat, or just wampus, has appeared in folklore throughout North America for over a hundred years and probably much longer, especially in mountainous areas in the eastern portion of the continent.

The term actually comes from the word catawampus, probably related to the phrase catty corner. Both words mean "something that's askew or turned diagonally," but catawampus was also once used in the southeastern United States to describe any strange creature lurking in the forest. It was a short step from catawampus to wampus cat, possibly also influenced by the word catamount, used for the cougar and other large cats native to North America.

Whatever the origins of the word, the wampus cat was usually considered a real animal. Some people probably used the term as a synonym for catamount, but many people firmly believed the wampus was a different animal from the cougar, bobcat, or lynx. It was usually supposed to be a type of big cat, although not necessarily.

The word wampus also once referred to a dress-like garment resembling a knee-length smock worn over leggings, also called a wampus coat. The first newspaper use of wampus referring to an animal doesn't appear until the very end of the 19th century. A Missouri paper wrote in May 1899:

> For some time speculation has been rife concerning the nocturnal appearance of some awful monster in the woods near Thomasville. Judge Humphreys declares he has had a sight of the "wampus" and can truthfully describe its mammoth proportions. […] They knew immediately the source of the hair-raising scream. The "wampus" was after them. They could see it; it was a big black thing with long hair and large feet.

> What may be a follow-up to that story, from a different Missouri newspaper, appeared in November 1899 and was headlined "THE WAMPUS IS DEAD Many described it as gray wolf, but others refused to believe such an animal was here and lightly spoke of the wampus. It frequented the dark woods at day time, coming forth at night and roaming around, uttering a strange cry. Woe unto the traveler overtaken by darkness, for the night was made hideous by the shrill cry. […]
>
> On last Sunday night George Jolliff secreted himself in a tree south of his house and about 7 o'clock saw the long-sought monster, accompanied by several dogs, approaching; on seeing his dog, which was tied beneath the tree, they come under the tree and Mr. Jolliff fired, severely wounding the animal. Hastily climbing down, he fired again and this stopped the monster in his tracks. […]
>
> It measured 6 feet 7 inches in length and 2 feet 4 inches in height; some say it is a female wolf, others a cross between the dog and wolf species. It is dark brown tinged with red and black.

This sounds like a coyote or red wolf, especially considering that it was accompanied by dogs. The size of the animal in metric is two meters long, presumably including the tail, and 73 centimeters tall. The height is accurate for a coyote or red wolf but it's much longer than even a gray wolf. It's possible the animal had an unusually long tail or there was a little exaggeration going on. Whatever the animal was, dogs, coyotes, and wolves don't make a screaming sound, so this wasn't the same animal that kept frightening people with its shrill cries.

By the beginning of the 1900s, the wampus as an animal had completely overtaken the use of the word as an article of clothing. The first baseball team named the Wampus Cats, from Texas, appears in 1908, which argues that the term wampus cat had been in common

use for some time. The surge of articles about the wampus cat also suggests the term had made its way from local use into the popular culture. By the 1910s, any unidentified animal is referred to as a wampus, from a striped rodent-like animal to an exhibit in a traveling menagerie, which unfortunately wasn't described. Humorous articles claiming to answer the question of "what is the wampus?" appear alongside humorous poetry about the wampus. Well, it supposed to be humorous but it's not actually funny. More sports teams named the Wampus Cats also appear in the 1910s, along with a cheer squad in Oklahoma called the Wampus Kittens—although interestingly, the Wampus Kittens were cheering the Wildcats.

By the 1920s, newspaper reports of the wampus cat were routine. Its description varies and most reports are light on definite details. Here are some examples of descriptions.

November 1897 (near Clarksville, Tennessee): "Mr. Gaisser was within ten feet of the strange animal and describes it as being about six feet in length, of a ferocious appearance, having long claws and looking as though it could attack and dispatch a man as easily as a hog. […] What kind of an animal it is Mr. Gaisser cannot say. It has the appearance of being either a jaguar, mountain lion or a catamount."

November 1918 (near Vestal, Tennessee, a community in south Knoxville): "It looked very much like a leopard. It was a short haired animal, with a slick, glossy coat. It was white and gray spotted, and had a long tail, with a bushy end."

November 1918 (near Knoxville, Tennessee): "It has a large head and its eyes are separated widely."

December 1918 (near Knoxville, Tennessee; the previous two accounts are of the same creature): "Some who say they have seen a strange beast prowling around after dark describe it as a large, long animal, with spots on its sides, and very much resembling a mountain lion."

December 1921 (in Howell County, Missouri): "Drake says it was a long lanky animal, had spots on it. Then Bill Webb saw the 'wampus cat.' It was in the day time. Bill says it was running and disappeared in a second. It was built like a tiger and light yellow in color, he reports."

January 1926 (near the Spring Creek community of Crenshaw County, Alabama): "The animal has been seen by a number of people, and apparently either is a panther or a monster wildcat from the recesses of Patsalega swamp. The beast is described as being of the size of a large shepherd dog, dark of hue and shaggy of coat. It steps from eighteen to twenty inches while walking, and when running it covers the ground in huge leaps of from six to ten feet. It has long claws, and leaves a footprint measuring two and one-half inches in width." (That's about 6.5 centimeters, which is not a very big pawprint for a big cat; a cougar's print would be up to four inches across, or 10 centimeters.)By the 1940s, newspaper mentions of the wampus as an animal diminish, taken over by sports teams with the name. By the 1960s wampus cat articles are mostly space-filling pieces talking about traditions among local oldtimers, usually with a humorous tone although again, they're not funny, and fewer sports teams carry the name. By the 2000s, when reporters were doing their research online, any mention of a wampus cat is accompanied by the (bogus) Cherokee story about a woman who could turn into a wildcat, and usually also claim that "wampus" is a Cherokee word.

Even though the term wampus fell out of favor slowly after its peak in the late 1920s, reports of cat-like animals were still appearing in newspapers. They just didn't get called wampus cats. A search for "strange animals" on Newspapers.com will bring up dozens of reports. Here are a few from the 1950s and 60s.

March 1950 (Nebraska): "I wasn't more than 20 rods [110 yards, or 100 meters] from him. He was reddish in color, about three feet high, and had a bushy mane (small) behind his head. His head was wide and he had broad shoulders."

January 1951 (Pennsylvania): "Sent to hunt a strange animal reported sighted in the Noxen-Harveys Lake area, three bloodhounds today were themselves the objects of an extensive search in that region. Meanwhile, other reports of 'strange' animals came from the Hazleton area. The three bloodhounds…began trailing the animal, variously described as a bobcat, lynx, or mountain lion…."

February 1955 (Pickens, South Carolina): "A resident…reported today he had seen the animal yesterday and described it as being black and having long hair and a long bushy tail. Mr. Findley said he heard weird sounds about 10 o'clock last night and went out with a

light and gun, but neither saw nor heard anything more. He said the sounds were similar to a huge cat."

July 1962 (Cherrytree Township, Pennsylvania): "According to Mr. Black, the large animal jumped from the limb of an oak tree on his farm and fled into the cover of a nearby game preserve. […] He pointed out the marks on the ground where the animal landed and inspected claw marks on the tree. […] Asked to compare its size with that of a large dog, the farmer said it was considerably larger and tawney coated."

February 1963 (near Roan Mountain in the Cherokee National Forest, south of Elizabethton, Tennessee): "It has a track larger than a big dog, and is black in color. A real shiny black. Most of the dogs refuse to track or bay this strange animal and those with nerve enough to get close to the animal wish they hadn't. Mr. Birchfield had one dog that was real brave and ventured close, but the poor dog was carried home by Birchfield with broken bones."

September 1965 (Fairview, North Carolina, between Thomasville and Lexington): "The 'animal,' described as dark in [color], resembling a cat but much larger, was first seen when the Thomasville-Lexington reservoir was under construction in the late 1950's. […] It has been reported that the cries sound 'like cats fighting, then ending with the sound of a bob-white bird.'"

Reports still happen today, posted online. In a May 2018 comment on an article about wampus cats, someone named Greg Brashear writes "I saw what the old farmers in my area in north central Ky. [Kentucky] call a 'wompus cat'. […] It was bigger than a bobcat but smaller than a cougar with yellow eyes and a [disproportionately] long tail and it was solid black."

The cougar (also called a mountain lion, puma, painter, catamount, or panther) was once common throughout most of the Americas but was hunted to extinction in much of the eastern United States around the early to mid-20$^{th}$ century. It's a big animal, able to kill deer, with a big male weighing as much as 100 kg [220 lb]. It can leap enormous distances—up to 40 feet while running, or 12 meters, up to 18 feet straight up into a tree, or 5 1/2 meters—and can sprint up to 50 mph, or 80 km/hour. It doesn't roar but instead produces an unearthly scream. It can also purr.

There's no doubt that at least some wampus cat reports were cougars. Cougar sightings have continued in the eastern United States and Canada through the present day. Young male cougars travel widely to establish a territory, so most modern sightings in the southeast are probably of young males who have traveled from populations in the west. There's evidence that many more cougars have started moving into the northeastern United States and Canada and may have even established breeding populations.

The cougar varies in color from tawny to reddish and is occasionally greyish-white. Occasionally a leucistic (white or partially white) individual is caught on camera traps, but there has never been a confirmed sighting of a melanistic (black) cougar. It's likely that sightings of wampus cats described as yellow or gray and white are actually cougar sightings.Another North American cat, the jaguar, is sometimes black in color. Jaguars are fairly common in South America but much less common in Central and North America. North American jaguars are also much smaller than South American populations, only about half the size of a cougar, while a big male in South America might be half again as large as a big male cougar. The jaguar strongly resembles the leopard, with rosette-like black spots on a tawny or yellowish background. Melanistic jaguars are usually called black panthers and are rare in the North American population.

By 1960 the jaguar was almost completely extirpated in the United States, but a population remains in northern Mexico and occasionally one roams across the border into Arizona, Texas, or New Mexico. It prefers heavily forested areas near water sources.

It's possible, although very unlikely, that a young male black panther could roam as far as the eastern United States and contribute to wampus cat sightings. On the other hand, the jaguar doesn't fit wampus cat descriptions very well either. The jaguar roars instead of screaming like the cougar, and its smaller stature and extreme shyness make it unlikely to venture close to humans.There is a third possibility, assuming the wampus cat isn't an animal new to science. The jaguarundi is also native to the Americas, including most of South and Central America through northern Mexico. It's related to the cougar and is solid colored, without spots, with a coat that can be black, gray -brown, or reddish. It's only about twice the size of a domestic cat but looks much different.

The jaguarundi's body is long and its legs are relatively short in proportion, which means it has a somewhat otter-like gait when it runs. Its rounded face has small round ears, also resembling an otter. Its tail is long, thick, and bushy. It lives in forests, rainforests, open areas (as long as there's brush to hide in), deserts, and mountains across a wide range, but it's not very well studied.

The jaguarundi used to be found in the United States, although its former range is unclear. Confirmed and/or credible sightings have been reported in Texas, Arizona, Alabama, and especially Florida, including roadkill animals. It mostly eats small animals like rodents, rabbits, birds, lizards, and fish. It's mostly nocturnal but is somewhat active during the day as well. It has at least 13 different calls, including whistles, growls, screams, and chattering and chirping.

This is interesting when compared to some of the wampus cat sightings. While the jaguarundi isn't a large animal and can't kill pigs and dogs, as is frequently reported for the wampus cat, it's a very vocal animal and can and does kill domestic poultry. Brashear's 2018 comment about a black cat with a disproportionately long tail sounds like a potential jaguarundi, although he described it as bigger than a bobcat when the bobcat is typically larger (although not as long, especially if you include the tail). The 1965 report of a dark-colored cat whose screams ended with a bird-like call (the bobwhite makes a two-tone whistle) also sounds like the jaguarundi.

It's exciting to think that many wampus cat sightings might be of the jaguarundi, especially since sightings continue to the present day. Fortunately, the jaguarundi is a protected species in the United States, and throughout most of its range. It would be great if these interesting wild cats were found to have established breeding populations in the less populated areas of the United States.bobcat when the bobcat is typically larger (although not as long, especially if you include the tail). The 1965 report of a dark-colored cat whose screams ended with a bird-like call (the bobwhite makes a two-tone whistle) also sounds like the jaguarundi.

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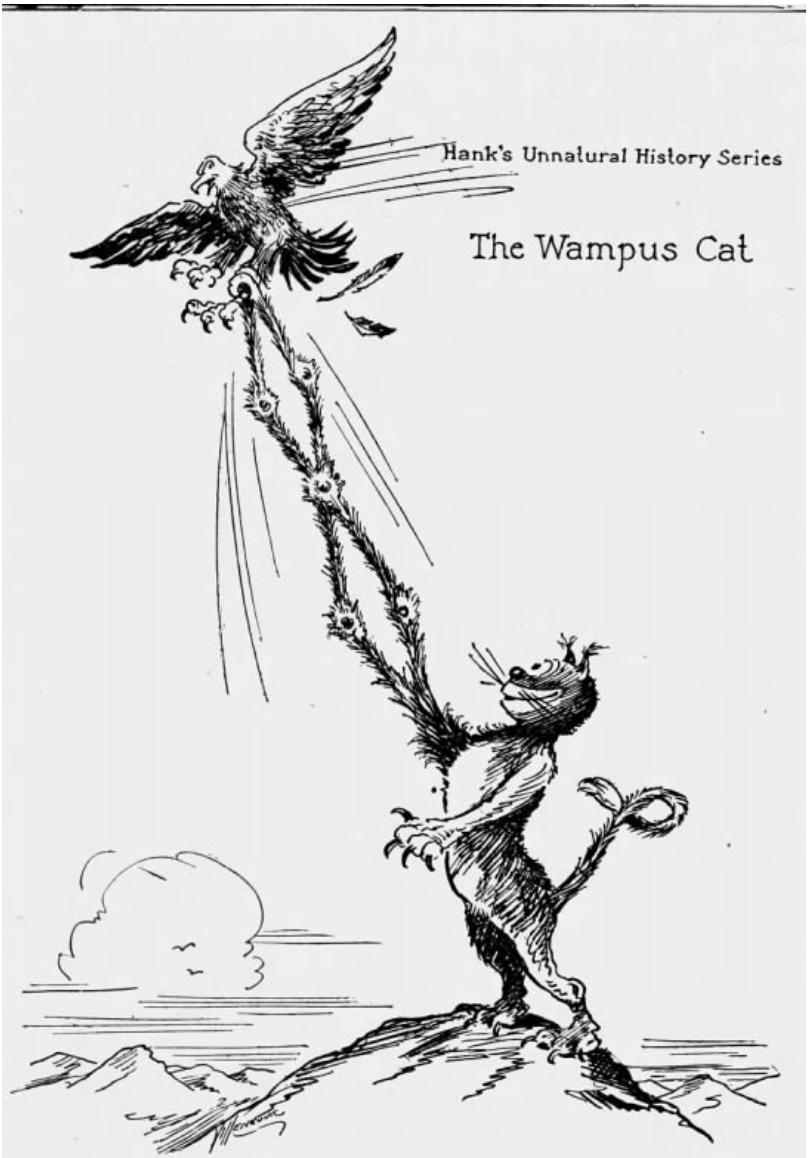


Behold the wily Wampus Cat
Old Mother Nature's wonder,
He captures eagles quick as scat
And they're his only plunder

He has one pantographic leg
The others are quite normal,
He gives and will no quarter beg,
His code is strictly formal

He roams the lonely mountain peaks
Keen eye the blue sky scanning,
And for the eagle ever seeks
With cunning feline planning.

His tread's so soft upon the earth
(More stealthy than a spectre)
To hear him ears are little worth
Without a sound detector!

N.C.V.

The Idaho Statesman, 28 March 1937, p.9

# A LANCASTRIAN AVIAN ANOMALY

## by RICHARD GEORGE

Hot off the press from the *Manchester Evening News* (July 4, 2021) is an article by Thomas George (no relation) entitled "The mystery bird of Radcliffe – how an unknown creature dominated the town's skies and baffled locals" (1).

In early September 1923, an unidentified bird was seen above the terraced houses of Radcliffe in the industrial North-West. It became a fixture on the chimneys of the East Lancashire Paper Mill.

The *Manchester Evening News*'s daily Diary feature for the 8th enquired: "A Strange Bird – Stork or Eagle ?" It was huge, according to their account - "fully four feet high".

A few days later, the same feature declared

"The latest designations of the mystery bird are:

Heron

Cormorant

Golden Eagle

Stork".

Put these four together and you have a truly incredible chimera !

On the 19th the *Halifax Daily Courier and Guardian* shed considerably more light on the matter in its article "Bird of Mystery".

It revealed that the bird flew daily to nearby Elton Reservoir and had a long beak, and quoted an observer with field glasses who said it had a yellow head and a pale grey breast.

There ended the journalism. Recently Kevin J. Guhl of New Jersey suggested the ornithological enigma was a rare transatlantic vagrant, the Great Blue Heron.

This case totally stumped me for a while. I wondered if the bird could have been our recent friend the Egyptian Vulture, with its yellow face. But what about the long bill and the connection with water ? But then I remembered the out-of-place Razorbill, as I believe it to have been, on a German roof (2). Not a rare bird, but an out-of-place one, looking, in context, very strange. Was the Radcliffe visitor, blown inland, a Gannet ? Gannets have a yellowish-buff or ochre coloration on the back of their heads. They have long beaks. And they're large: their wingspan can reach six feet. The only out of kilter feature is that their plumage is white, not grey. But maybe it was being stained by the soot and smoke belching out of Lancashire chimneys !

A Gannet is a bird most Radcliffe residents would have been unfamiliar with. Hence the consternation, and the "What it it ?" factor. "Stork plus cormorant" would actually not have been a bad description of a Gannet by people who had never seen one.

Continuing the theme of "Not rare, but incongruous", I've always been fascinated, since reading about it in Keel, by the account of the headless, bat-winged, web-footed, waddling monstrosity of Hythe that loosened those teenagers' bowels in the early Sixties. What if it was not a demonic denizen of nightmares but, transmogrified by circumstances...

wait for it…

a Mute Swan ?

Swans have webbed feet, obviously, and waddle. Out of the water they are very tall and threatening, and can look absolutely weird. In the dark, a swan's relatively thin head and neck could be invisible. With poor lighting, other stuff going on (mysterious UFO-like lights and young adult preoccupations), and possibly an aggressive attitude from the bird (male swans can be bolshy so-and-sos), could an ordinary swan, on land, spreading its wings, have looked terrifying ?

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# THE "WINGED WOMAN" OF DA NANG – A RE-EVALUATION

## by RICHARD GEORGE

Among all our Fortean gallimaufry, the "winged weirdos", as John Keel calls them, have always fascinated me the most. Over the years, as sex, drugs, rock and roll and transcendentalism have given way to the quieter pleasures of cracking a really good cryptic crossword, I've started thinking what Mothman, the headless batman of Hythe and the Da Nang bird- or bat-woman could have been that wouldn't require us to revise the laws of science.

I don't intend to go into the Audubon aviary of birds that Mothman could have been. I have a photo clipping from a newspaper of a sandhill crane standing huge and extending its wings in a defensive posture that looks extraordinarily weird, so maybe Keel was wrong to dismiss this identification (1). The Hythe monstrosity, I now believe, could have been a Mute Swan walking on land in silhouette, extending *its* wings. The Vietnamese entity, from 1969, is in some ways the strangest of all.

I won't repeat all of main witness Earl Morrison's testimony: it's readily available in Keel and the Bords (2). But here are some of the salient details: enormous compared to "a regular bat"; arms without bones, like a bat; covered with fur; surrounded by a greenish glow; so close at one stage she blotted out the moon. This is what I will be working with.

What on earth do we make of this ? Some will mock, like Robert Sheaffer. In 1986 he wrote:

*A Mothman's life may not turn out to be as lonely as one might at first expect, for there have also been sightings of Mothwomen…*

*Joining Mothman in West Virginia is Vegetable Man, a strange alien creature that, when first sighted, was mistaken for a bush…* (3).

Cheap laughs. You get the picture. Mind you, Empedocles, the Greek philosopher, claimed he had been a bush in one of his incarnations (4), and *Vegetable Man* is a Pink Floyd track written by Syd Barrett (5). What a menage a trois Mothman, the Da Nang female and Syd Barrett would have been !

Earl Morrison's account is plasticine for the playful imagination. Was it the ghost of a woman soldier of the Vietcong, flying over the GIs to say "You haven't killed me - here I am in spirit" ? Poetically true, perhaps (I just haven't written the poem yet !) I've even wondered if it was Susan Blackmore on that opening OOBE odyssey of hers. Susan Blackmore, with bat's wings, flying over Vietnam around the time of Woodstock. What a stupendous image ! Sadly, for one thing, the chronology is wrong. She had this experience as a student at Oxford, and she only started at her college, St. Hilda's, in the autumn of 1970 (6).

But seriously, folks…

Surprisingly little has been written about this case suggesting a cryptozoological, flesh and blood solution. The Bords pose the very sensible question "Could these be giant bats ?" (7), but don't pursue it very far. There are reports from Indonesia of the Ahool, a bat with a twelve-foot wingspan and a flattened face that could be mistaken for a human's (8). But do megabats need to be that massive and apocryphal to be mistaken for "winged people" ?

The armspan of an average woman, apparently, is five feet,

four inches. Keep that stat in mind.

Last year, the *Sun* newspaper reported on a "human-sized bat" in the Philippines (9). Nothing paranormal here: it was a giant golden-crowned flying fox, very close to the camera. As a result of the illusion of forced perspective (10), it looked much larger than it was. Remember Morrison: the entity was so close it blotted out the moon. Did another optical illusion occur, amplifying the delicate body of a flying fox to what looked like human size ? The giant golden-crowned flying fox has a span of five and a half feet. Almost exactly like our average woman.

This doesn't live in Vietnam, but a similar animal, the not very imaginatively named Large Flying Fox (*pteropus vampyrus*), is known from the extreme south of the country (11). Da Nang is some way to the north of its range, but it has recently been discovered that flying foxes are more nomadic than previously thought (12).

Also, there seems to be a striking degree of uncertainty about the Large Flying Fox's wingspan. The maxima quoted range from four feet eleven inches to seven feet (13). The larger the wingspan, the more likely the misidentification with a winged woman. Was Susan, as I can't resist calling the creature, a Large Flying Fox ? Or was it an even larger, hitherto undiscovered species of megabat ? There is another detail I've saved until now. Underneath, Susan looked like "a normal, well-developed woman". Flying fox young cling to the mother's underside in flight. Could young, and their mother's lactating nipples, along with the optical illusion, have given the impression of a woman's anatomy ?

As for the eerie greenish glow, I may have an answer for that too. Nocturnal animals have a layer of tissue in their eyes directly behind the retina called the *tapetum lucidum* (14). This causes their eyes to glow in the dark, and green is a colour often mentioned. If the GIs were shining a spotlight on Susan, could she have been suffused

with green light ?

There is a possibility very large, undiscovered megabats exist in Thailand, as well as Vietnam. Philip J. Imbrogno was in Thailand between 1969 and 1971. In the jungle, searching for a reported Bigfoot-like entity, he saw an "eight foot tall" creature which jumped "as if it bounced off a trampoline", and then three pairs of eyes reflecting yellow in the night. He later met a Thai zoologist who suggested he might have seen orang-utans, although they are not recorded from this country (15).

The alleged movement of the tall creature here reminds me of a "winged weirdo" case in the Bords where a shadow "bounced upwards into a pecan tree" (16). Had Imbrogno encountered a massive megabat ? This is more likely than a batsquatch, or a pole-vaulting Bigfoot.

In all this there is, of course, another factor… psychology. GIs in Vietnam took vast amounts of amphetamines, which can cause psychosis with visual hallucinations (17). Also, on watch at night, without much visual stimulation, soldiers might experience something like "highway hypnosis", with the brain filling in. Young men, their brains fried and frazzled by speed and adrenaline, unfamiliar with the local fauna… you can see how they might misinterpret something.

There is also a strange passage in Mark Pilkington's *Mirage Men*:

*Local superstitions were also exploited during the Vietnam War, where the Army's 6th PSYOPS battalion regularly broadcast an audio recording called "The Wailing Soul" through speakers mounted on backpacks or helicopters. Preying on Vietnamese superstitions of the unquiet dead, the tape contained a conversation between a little girl and the wandering soul of her dead father, who had been killed while fighting the Americans. The recording, which made heavy use of eeerie reverb effects and traditional Vietnamese funeral music, was*

*so effective that it also spooked American soldiers patrolling the jungle at night* (18).

We're almost back with my "woman soldier ghost" poetic fancy. It's hard to see how the American military could have faked a bat-woman with wings a-flap, but these "psy-ops" could have confused the GIs, amplified their fear of the unknown and made a misidentification more likely.

I mentioned Woodstock earlier in this article, and I'll leave the last to Jimi Hendrix. *Foxy Lady* was one of his most famous compositions (19), but he also wrote extraordinarily beautiful love songs featuring imagery of winged women: *Little Wing*, *Angel*, and *Night Bird Flying.*

A flying foxy lady ?

*Just wrap me up in your beautiful wings…*

## REFERENCES

(1) John A. Keel, *The Mothman Prophecies* (1975), p.70. The photo clipping is currently in the possession of the editor of this magazine.

(2) Keel op.cit., p.34f.; Janet and Colin Bord, *Alien Animals* (1980), p.131f.

(3) Robert Sheaffer, *The UFO Verdict: Examining the Evidence*

(1986), p.175f.

(4) M.C. Howatson, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* (1989), p.477.

(5) Intriguingly, Manchester post-punk band The Mothmen recorded a version of *Vegetable Man* in the early 1980s.

(6) Susan Blackmore, *In Search of the Light: The Adventures of a Parapsychologist* (1996), p.14f. Unless, of course, she was travelling in time as well as space !

(7) Bords op.cit., p,143.

(8) Ivan T. Sanderson, *Investigating the Unexplained* (1972).

(9) thesun.co.uk/news/12051892/photo-human-sized-bat-not-fake-not-seems

(10) popularmechanics.com/science/animals/a33247130/giant-flying-fox-bat/

(11) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Large_flying_fox

(12) abc.net/au/news, August 27 2020

(13) Compare, for example, pinterest;

thewebsiteofeverything.com/animals/mammals/Chiroptera/Pteropodidae/Pteropus/Pteropus-vampyrus.html;

seaworld.org/animals/facts/mammals/malayan-flying-fox

(14) For instance, nightwiki.blogspot.com/2018/09/tapetum-lucidum.html

(15) Philip J. Imbrogno, *Files from the Edge* (2010), pp.150-161

(16) Bords op.cit., p.125

(17) Alan F. Schatzberg, Charles B. Nemeroff, *The American Psychiatric Publishing Textbook of Psychopharmacology* (2009), p.847f.

(18) Mark Pilkington, *Mirage Men* (2010), p.74.

(19) Synchronistically, the day after I finished this article I read in the *Daily Telegraph* (July 29, 2021) the obituary of Lithofayne Pridgon, one of several voluptuous women cited as the inspiration behind *Foxy Lady.*

# Notes & Queries

# Very strange snakes in California

## The Desert Magazine April 1939

Hunting snakes which have the peculiar practice of standing on their heads and diving under the sand, through which they scoot along underground as fast as they can travel on the surface. Walt Wilhelm and his brother Al went into Death Valley. The two sportsmen-hunters had heard tall tales told by prospectors about these strange snakes and about lizards as long as a man`s arm living in the same neighbourhood. They now report they found these reptiles, although not of the size reported by the prospector. The Wilhelms say they took several fine specimens of the lizards, actually saw the snakes`s subterranean journeyings.

# Egyptian Vulture in the Scilly Isles

## I paper June 16th 2021

## Rare Egyptian vulture visits Isles of Scilly

Egyptian Vulture. Wikipedia Creative Commons

Birdwatchers on the Isles of Scilly could not believe their luck when they caught a glimpse of the first Egyptian vulture on British shores for more than 150 years. It is thought that the endangered giant bird, which is native to southern Europe,northern Africa and parts of Asia,flew over from France to the isles off the Cornish coast after getting confused while migrating…"

# Do toads like music?

The reference to the **Times is 19 Oct 1930**, p. 10: "MUSICAL TOADS I wonder how many of your readers who were amused with the pictures of the toad in your issue of November 8 know that toads are easily attracted by music or the human voice. Some years ago I was staying in a house in Caterham where the drawing-room had a window opening into the garden. I knew of at least one toad in that garden, and I asked my friends if they would like to see him, and possibly others with him, on the rug just inside their drawing-room window. They ridiculed the idea, but gave me permission to lure them if I could. So I played a guitar for some time just inside the room but out of sight. When no fewer than nine toads had gathered one after another and were sitting on the rug listen ing with rapt attention to the music, my friends said there were enough, and were fully convinced that toads were, as I had said, really music-loving creatures.- Mrs. JOHN B. CAPPER, St. Michael's, Reigate."

# Thousands of pigeons vanish

**The Times June 25th 2021:**"Mystery surrounds the disappearance of up to 10,000 pigeons which went missing during races on Saturday (June 19th) in an "unprecedented" phenomenon.Some of the birds have still not returned, leaving fanciers concerned and baffled, while other pigeons emerged hours or days after they were expected. Ian Evans,chief executive of the Royal Pigeon Racing Association (RPRA) said they had quickly realised something unusual was happening. "I`m 45 and have kept pigeons since I was nine years of age and I have never heard of anything like this…"

# Mystery Orcas

## I Paper July 24th 2021

A “mystery” pod of orcas last seen in Scotland in 2018 have been spotted again-on the west coast of Norway.The six killer whales, described as an “enigma”by scientists at the time due to unusual markings on their backs, were previously spotted off Vatersay in the Western Isles.Now,three members of the group have been reported by the Norwegian Orca Survey after a citizen scientist photographed a pod of six orcas in Børøyfjorden on 10 July.The mammals matched entries in the Scottish killer whale catalogue.

# Fresh water sharks

## Thanks to Bob Skinner

**Animal Discoveries and Curiosities Facebook Group**

**https://gizmodo.com/two-bull-sharks-swam-up-the-mississippi-river-all-the-w-1847300882?fbclid=IwAR3gxG-o7YLAmDjNfXgb7ERAXS5dJxaCzhGmgtGD_zZzr3PUaIQyBcI5fe0**

## Two bull sharks swam up the Mississippi River as far as St.Louis  Date unknown

"Bull sharks are coastal creatures, but at least two of the animals were able to make it as far inland as St. Louis by swimming up the Mississippi River, according to a team of researchers who looked at the shark's fossil record and reported sightings over the years.The research duo—Ryan Shell, a paleontologist at the Cincinnati Museum Center and Nicholas Gardner, a librarian at WVU Potomac State College with degrees in ecology and evolutionary biology—scrutinized hundreds of reports of sharks in the Mississippi River and compared those historical records with archaeological and paleontological evidence for bull sharks moving in those waterways in the distant past. Their results were published in the journal Marine & Fishery Sciences."I believe Ryan mentioned something like 'hey, bull sharks *can* go up the Mississippi,' and my first thought was, 'bull****,'" Gardner wrote in an email.The sharks are known to make forays into

freshwater beyond the African, Asian, Australian, and American coasts they inhabit, and the fossil record holds evidence of bull sharks in the river, but not in its upper basin. Some teeth are found inland, but not in natural fossil beds and in association with teeth from other species,

# Badger`s funeral

## The Field July 31st 1969

**Funeral of a badger**

*From Count Joseph H O'Kelly de Gallagh*

SIR, A few weeks ago when visiting my old home in County Galway I noticed a dead badger by the side of the road, evidently killed by a passing car. Next morning I noticed that the body was hidden under piled-up leaves. There were no leaves on the wide grass verge and I wondered what passer-by on this remote, little-used road had taken the trouble to gather leaves from the adjoining wood and use them for a funeral pall. Later that day the leaves had been dispersed and scattered by the wind, but next morning I was surprised to see the body again hidden under piled leaves. Intrigued by this, I mentioned it to an old farm hand who had worked at my home all his lifetime. He looked surprised at my ignorance and said, "Ah did you never hear that badgers always bury their own dead?" Although country-bred, this bit of lore had escaped me. The dead badger's friends must have spent most of each night collecting and carrying those leaves out of the wood.

The field
31-7-1969

I. H. O'KELLY DE GALLAGH
London SW7.

# Man eating bears in Japan

## Hungry bears of Hokkaido turning into man-eaters

## The Times July 16th 2021

“Hungry brown bears have become man-eaters on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido ,killing or injuring the largest number of people since records began 61 years ago.

There have been at least nine attacks this year, three of them fatal. Part of one body, eventually identified as a farmer in her seventies who had been working in a field close to a forest, was found buried in a grass-covered hole, apparently dug by the bear to preserve its kill…”

# Giant gold fish at Bletchley Park

Bletchley Park is famous as being the location in Buckinghamshire of the country house where the code breakers were located during the fight against Nazi Germany during World War 2. Less well known are the giant gold fish located there. On July 13th I posted on the Facebook group Fortean Times Appreciation a story about giant gold fish turning up in a lake in Minnesota. On July 14th Chris Harris replied: “The lake at Bletchley Park served the same purpose for generations of Bletchley's goldfish. When I worked there in the 80s I used to spend my lunchtimes in the summer sitting and watching one of the local herons gamely working its way through the burgeoning population... “

Chris has given me permission to reproduce his remark.

# By nightmare out of flying saucer

## Daily Telegraph (Sydney,New South Wales)

## July 23rd 1947

LONDON,Tuesday The Paris newspaper L`Intransigeant today gives eyewitness accounts of “huge serpents which are terrorizing southern France”.The eyewitnesses told the Marseilles correspondent of the paper that the serpents

- Were from seven to 10 feet long
- Weighed from eight to 14 stone
- Leaped like kangaroos or flew
- Had cocks combs on their heads

## Above From Forteanaexchange

# Mystery African Hominid

## Carrizozo News (New Mexico) May 28th 1909

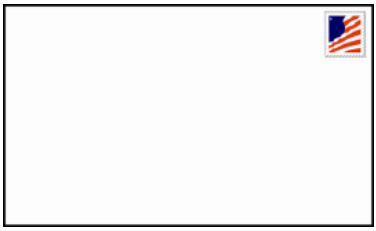
“The deadly aim of Colonel K.and son Korinit (at short range) continues to astonish the natives of the Dark Continent. Last week the Colonel killed a rhino,and Korinit lauded a hyena. Uul the latest and most notable exploit of the Colonel is the capture alive of a pithecanthropis alalus,
an animal known to the uatives as a bwana gink, or, in plain United States, as a "little man."
According to the censorized dis
-patches that emanate from the interior of Mombasa, the queer little fellow was ambushed in the jungle by one of the army of native stalkers, who was on the point of pinking(sic) it when it gave the "high sign," which the royal hunter answered by a wave of the "big stick," and riding up, with a dexterous reach, snatched the strange creature up and placed it before him on the saddle. It is a rare specimen  of ape, and is said to somewhat resemble its captor about the mouth, who is rearing it on giraffe's... bottle, and to whom it is attached. The creature is said to be very intelligent and is quickly "catching on" to the lingo of the Colonel..”

# Supposed coypu in Sussex

Another find by **Bob Skinner**

You remember me mentioning the coypu supposedly caught in Sussex, that was displayed at Potter's museum at Bamber? It was to be seen in the background of a more recent photo of the collection (when at Arundel). Well, I found I had an illustrated booklet about the collection, entitled "Potters Museum of Curiosity- 6 High Street, Aundel, Sussex". On p. 7, exhibit 148 is described: "148. Large Coypu rat shot on a bank of the River Adur about one-and-a-half miles from Bramber. Weight 18lbs; length from nose to tip of tail 40ins. (excluding tail, 25ins) - illustrated by Ripley in the 'Believe it or not' strip in the Sunday Express, September 25th 1949 These rats were almost unknown in this country in 1904 when this one was shot, and it can only be assumed that it escaped from one of the boats bringing timber to Shoreham, and travelled up the river. It is a particularly fine specimen being about 10 inches longer than the normal full grown rat of the same species. The Coypu or Racoonda Myopotamus Coypus), is an inhabitant of South America, where its habits are gregarious and aquatic. Nowadays live specimens are frequently on show to the public, and they are also bred specially for nutria fur (a substitute for beaver). A photograph of it when first caught can be seen on the landing." This confirms the date and location of the catch, which was well before they were imported for fur farming.

# letters and e-mails



## TELLING THE BEES

### From Richard George e-mail of June 28th 2021

Further to Loes Modderman's article on "Telling the bees", I've found a passage referring to this practice in Doris Jones-Baker's book *The Folklore of Hertfordshire* (1977). It's on page 76. She's quoting directly from an article by Edith Rinder in an 1894 edition of the *Hertfordshire Illustrated Review*:

"Here, as elsewhere, it is considered essential to apprise them of the death of any prominent inmate of the household to which they belong: the ceremony generally takes place upon the day of the death after sunset, when an old servant or other esteemed member of the establishment taps three times at the different hives, and, in a voice audible to the whole community, tells of the sad event that has occurred. On occasion the bees are even regaled with wine and cake, but this is by no means usual. Anyone failing to inform the bees after this manner will, it is said, lose them all, whether by death or flight, and more than one instance in the County is brought forward in corroboration of this curious belief".

All best,
Richard

# WILD BOARS THREATENING BIRDS

## From Richard George Letter early July 2021

Richard ,hi

This is a kind of sequel to that clipping I sent you about the Marks & Spencer product featuring British birds that weren`t. It`s a clipping from the *Sunday Telegraph* (see below) yesterday (July 11,2021)

"Five native [UK] bird species threatened by wild boar…"

Namely,hen harrier, Pallas`s gull, little curlew, common crane and common pochard.

There is only one certain UK record of Pallas`s gull (aka great black-headed gull),and that`s from 1859. The little curlew was first recorded here in 1982. "Mega" rarities, and hardly "native" (although to be fair they are referred to as "vagrants")

The journalist,Joe Pinkstone,also describes the other three birds as common in the UK.The pochard maybe, but not the crane or the hen harrier.

Mr Pinkstone is a *Telegraph* Science Correspondent,and probably a good one, but ornithology is not his field.

Richard

## `Destructive` wild boars threaten birds

**Sunday Telegraph July 11th 2021** Wild boar in the UK are threatening five native bird species, a study has warned, and could force them out of some areas of the UK. It is estimated around

5,000 feral hogs are present in the UK, with most in the south-west of England,specifically the Forest of Dean…"

## Poem about a tiger

## From Richard George by e-mail

## July 19th 2021

Richard,

Thought you might be amused by this humorous poem by Basil Bunting

about a tiger, on page 87 of his *Collected Poems* (1978 edition). Bunting (1900-1985) is a Northumbrian poet considered one of the modern greats. He's the presiding spirit of the threateningly-named poetry book publisher Bloodaxe.

FEARFUL SYMMETRY

(Ode 13)

Muzzle and jowl and beastly brow,
bilious glaring eyes, tufted ears,
recidivous criminality in the slouch,
-This is not the latest absconding bankrupt
but a "beautiful" tiger imported at great expense from
Kuala Lumpur.

7 photographers, 4 black-and-white artists and an R.A.
are taking his profitable likeness;
28 reporters and an essayist

Sundry ladies think he is a darling
especially at mealtimes, observing
that a firm near the docks advertises replicas
fullgrown [*sic*] on approval for easy cash payments.

Male Felis Tigris (Straits Settlements) (Bobo) takes exercise
up and down his cage before feeding
in a stench of excrements of great cats
indifferent to beauty or brutality.
He is said to have eaten several persons
but of course you can never be quite sure of these things.

(In the text "male" is the scientific symbol, but my laptop doesn't have that in "Special Characters").

Bunting dates all his poems, and this one is from 1929 (he uses the now obsolete designation *Felis tigris*). What's interesting is that Bobo hails from the Straits Settlements. These, of course, were four relatively small coastal areas of colonial Malaya, including what is now Singapore. The Malaysian tiger's range has shrunk over the past hundred years. Could Bobo have been one of the last Singaporean tigers ?

All best,

Richard

# Articles in Fate
# Thanks to Gary Mangiacopra

## Volume 12,Number 12,Issue 117,December 1959

## JOEY LENTINI,4,READER

JOEY LENTINI of Pittsburgh,Pennsylvania,is some kind of child prodigy. He`s only four but he reads like a whiz kid. More remarkable, he taught himself to read. Joey`s dad is a barber and a little over a year ago, when Joey was only three he noticed Joey was fascinated by the printed word. He said to Joey`s mother:
"Look,Joey is pretending he knows how to read."

Joey looked up and began,"The stock market in New York City…"

Joey`s folks swear they can`t pronounce some of the words Joey eats up. He couldn`t have learned them from his parents, they say. Maybe TV?

Joey refuses to look at Mother Goose but he reads the newspapers and magazines like nobody`s business.

Joey can`t write yet. Only read. But the big mystery is, can Joey understand what he reads. Funny thing. He can`t talk very well so nobody can be sure.

# Volume 12,Number 12,Issue 117,December 1959.

## MEXICAN MUMMIES

In the wild, rough terrain in Eastern Sonora State,Mexico, a group of surveyors recently made a sensational discovery. Sealed behind a huge rock they found a tremendous cave and 600 feet deep within the cave they found 30 perfectly preserved mummies which “may be” over 10,000 years old.

The mummies were dressed in fine clothing and valuable jewelry and are believed to be priests and high officials of a vanished civilisation.

Luis Encinas, rector of the University of Sonora,declared the find was “the most important discovery yet in the history of the northern culture of Mexico.”

# Volume 13,Number 11,Issue 128

## A TINY VOICE

Sam Winer

Brooklyn,New York

A friend of mine has two male parakeets. There is a little mirror in their cage. Towards evening she covers the cage and the “budgies”go to sleep. If,when all is quiet, she turns toward the cage and says,”Mirror,mirror,on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?” after a while a tiny voice from within the cage answers,”You!”

My friend swears she never taught the birds anything and, besides, how would they know that she was addressing them when what she says is spoken in the normal tone in which the conversation is carried on in the room?

# Volume 13,Number 11,Issue 128, November 1960

## JOY IN THE SKY

Kathleen M.Arsenault

Amherst,Nova Scotia

I was reared by my grandparents in a small country village. After supper one evening I was watching the clouds in the sky when, suddenly, three letters appeared for one brief moment. I couldn`t explain the color but one often seen the same shades in the sunset. The letters were probably about a foot high and they appeared side by side. They spelled J O Y.

That brief vision, or whatever it would be properly called, has remained in my memory and many times I have wondered about the possible significance of such an experience.

It is not unusual for me to have a dream come true. I often dream events with uncanny accuracy before they happen. I would be interested in an explanation of this vision in the sky.

# Volume 12,Number 11,Issue 116,November 1959

## BLINKING UFO

Mary A.Cook

Quantico,Virginia

At 11:05 pm on July 8,1959,I saw a UFO to the east of our house over the Potomac River. I watched it until 11:30.As it came from the east toward our house it was blue-white and at times yellow. It swung a little to the south, then started east again, showing red and blinking. At times it seemed to dance or pulsate. It cut rather a wide swath. On

one of the trips around I saw a cigar-like outline with what looked like smoke coming from the rear.

I have watched for UFO`s since 1947.This was the first I`ve seen.

# Volume 12,Number 5,Issue 110,May 1959

## WHAT,AGAIN?

We hope we`re not boring you by recounting another story of ice falling from the sky in Madison Township, New Jersey. County police have been on the trail of sky ice since last September ,when a 70 -lb chunk smashed through the home of Mr and Mrs Dominic Bacigalupo of 336 Greystone Road. Alas, as befitting the subject, the trail was never very hot. Later,other pieces of ice were found at the home of Mr and Mrs Russell Kane of Spotswood.Raymond Dill,Jr,actually saw some sky ice fall one morning while waiting on a customer at an Esso Servicenter owned jointly with his father. A chunk the size of a baseball smashed down on the driveway.

Then on December 23 four chunks the size of a grapefruit nearly hit Captain William Walls and two detectives while they were investigating an accident on the Morristown Road.

Things have gotten to the point where Police Chief Edward Adler has issued orders to keep sterilized containers at police headquarters to store future falls for analysis. At this writing the containers haven`t been called into service.

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